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THE

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OF

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FOR THE YEAR MDCCCLII.

EDINBURGH:
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MDCCCLII.

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Secretary, Robert Pitcairn, F.S.A. Scot.

CALVIN SOCIETY'S OFFICE, 9 NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, EDINBURGH.

New Subscribers are still admitted **on the original terms.** All the Works hitherto published may be obtained at once on transmitting £10 to the Secretary; or, parties may take one or more years' Books, and obtain the remainder at intervals, quarterly or yearly, when convenient for them.

Separate Commentaries, or odd volumes, may now be had by Non-Subscribers at 7s. 6d. per vol., (excepting the Institutes, at 10s. each vol.)

☞ *Post-Office Orders and Bank Bills or Cheques to be made payable to the Secretary, and transmitted* **direct** *to the Office.*

THE

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1852.

New English Translations of Calvin's Works.

THE SECRETARY has much pleasure in now laying before the Subscribers to the Series a short statement of the progress of this important Scheme, and of the Works which have already been distributed among the Members, or are now in the course of circulation, for the Year 1852.

The Books which have been distributed in return for the Annual Subscriptions received for the Year 1852, are the following:—

I. COMMENTARIES ON THE LAST FOUR BOOKS OF MOSES, ARRANGED IN THE FORM OF A HARMONY. VOL. I.

With Preface, Annotations, &c., by the Rev. CHARLES WILLIAM BINGHAM, M.A., Rector of Melcombe-Horsey, Dorset, and formerly Fellow of New College, Oxford.

II. COMMENTARIES ON THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL. VOL. I.

With Preface by the Translator, Calvin's Dedicatory Epistle to The Pious Protestants of France, Dissertations, &c.; by the Rev. THOMAS MYERS, M.A., Vicar of Sheriff-Hutton, Yorkshire.

III. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH. VOL. III.

With Preface by the Translator, and a New Translation of the Text of Isaiah, contained in this Volume, from the original Hebrew, as modified by Calvin's Version; by the Rev. WILLIAM PRINGLE, Auchterarder.

IV. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH. VOL. III.
With a New Translation from the Hebrew of the Text of Jeremiah, contained in this Volume, as modified by Calvin's Versions; by the Rev. JOHN OWEN, Vicar of Thrussington, Leicestershire.

These Volumes form the Nineteenth and Twentieth Issues.

The above-mentioned Volumes have already been transmitted, through the usual channels, to every Member whose Subscriptions have hitherto reached THE OFFICE, 9, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh. Parties whose friends or Correspondents have omitted to remit their ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS and ARREARS, will be so good as instruct them to do so *without delay*, by Post-Office or Bank Orders, or Cheques, payable to the Secretary, and their Parcels will immediately be sent *free of carriage* to any address in London, Dublin, or Edinburgh; or they will be booked at Railway Offices, or other Public Conveyances, to be forwarded from thence, at their own risk and expense, to their respective destinations. Those who wish their Bankers to pay their Subscriptions yearly, will be pleased to send the Secretary a special mandate to that effect.

To facilitate the prompt and accurate delivery of future parcels, Subscribers are particularly requested to send timely notice to the Office of the Secretary of all the changes of Residence and Address, or of any alterations in the present mode of conveyance.

The necessity of making prompt and punctual payment of the Annual Contributions is again most earnestly impressed on the Subscribers, so as to enable the Secretary to arrange the various materials—to put the Works to press at an earlier date than heretofore—and to regulate the number of copies to be printed. If the Members were uniformly to transmit their Annual payments, in the usual manner, **direct to the Office in Edinburgh, in January or February of each year,** all the other arrangements would be greatly facilitated; and *early delivery of the Books would also be secured* till the close of the Society's operations.

THE WORKS which are in preparation for THE YEAR 1853, in return for the Annual Subscription **payable on the First day of January 1853,** and which will form the *Twenty-first and Twenty-second Issues*, are as follow:—

1. COMMENTARY AND HARMONY OF THE PENTATEUCH. VOL. II.
2. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL. VOL. II., (*which completes that Commentary.*)

3. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH. VOL. IV.
4. COMMENTARY ON ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, (*completed.*)

At this stage of the operations of the Calvin Translation Society, it seems to be highly desirable that its labours should be drawn to a close as early as possible, by selecting the most useful and practical of the COMMENTARIES OF CALVIN for publication. On a careful estimate, it has been found that the Works already commenced, and which are in a satisfactory state of progress in the hands of our learned and indefatigable Translators and Editors, **will be completed in the year 1856**, being THREE YEARS after the publication of the Works above announced as in preparation for the year **1853**. The portions of Calvin's Writings thus advancing in active preparation for the press, consist of the most valuable of his Old Testament Commentaries, viz., the remaining volumes of the Harmony of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Daniel; with the concluding Epistles of the New Testament.

It will therefore be impracticable for this Society to enter on the translation of the remaining THEOLOGICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS, TREATISES, AND SERMONS OF CALVIN, as they are so voluminous. As to his extensive CORRESPONDENCE, including the large Collections recently discovered in France, as well as those which are still carefully preserved at Geneva, and elsewhere, the Secretary is happy to announce that it is likely that they will soon be arranged, and published in this country, so that the Members of this Society, as well as the public in general, will, it is trusted, have an early opportunity of procuring so important a publication.

From the arrangements which have already been made, the Secretary can pledge himself that, under the permission and blessing of God, these invaluable Works will be brought to a satisfactory termination within the time specified, if all our Subscribers do their utmost to co-operate with him by enlarging the number of our Members.

There are few individuals who cannot prevail on some friend to join the Scheme; or, at least, influence others who have the direction of Parish, Congregational, Vestry, or Lending Libraries, Religious Societies, Reading Clubs, and other Public Institutions, to purchase the Series for their respective Libraries. Others may individually, or with the assistance of friends, present sets of the Works to their Ministers, deserving Students of Divinity, or private friends.

It is of essential importance that every one who is desirous to promote this Scheme should now co-operate in carrying it out with full vigour and efficiency; and for this purpose **an earnest appeal is once more made to** EACH SUBSCRIBER, **to lend his utmost influence and personal support towards the extension of the Calvin Society.**

Re-Issue of New Translations of Calvin's Works.

In compliance with various suggestions which had been made from time to time, it was resolved early in 1850, to make a RE-ISSUE OF THE WHOLE OF CALVIN'S WORKS so far as they have hitherto been completed. This RE-ISSUE commenced on 1st November 1850, to enable NEW SUBSCRIBERS to join the Society on the most favourable terms, (being the same price as was paid for the original Subscription.) Individuals now joining, may thus procure the Books, either together or periodically, as shall be most convenient for them; —and non-subscribing Clergy, Students of Divinity, and others, will be enabled by this plan to *select* any of the SEPARATE COMMENTARIES OR PORTIONS of these Translations which they may require.

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ROBERT PITCAIRN,
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INSTITUTED MAY 1843.

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FOR THE YEAR MDCCCXLII.

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WORKS OF THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.—RE-ISSUE

COMMENCING ON 1st NOVEMBER 1850.

FIRST YEAR, (1843.)

ROMANS, (Old Version.) — TRACTS, Vol. I. (*completed,*) ..... *First Issue.*
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, (Old Version.) Vols. I. & II. (*completed,*) ..... *Second Issue.*

*** Three of the above volumes being Old Translations, these books do not necessarily form a part of the present Re-issue. It is optional, however, for parties to have them at the original subscription price, or separate volumes at 7*s.* 6*d.* each.

SECOND YEAR, (1844.)

INSTITUTES, Vol. I. — HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS, Vol. I., ... *Third Issue.*
INSTITUTES, Vol. II. — PSALMS, Vol. I., ... *Fourth Issue.*

THIRD YEAR, (1845.)

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS, Vols. II. & III., ... *Fifth Issue.*
INSTITUTES, Vol. III. (*completed.*) — PSALMS, Vol. II., ... *Sixth Issue.*

FOURTH YEAR, (1846.)

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS, Vols. I. & II., ... *Seventh Issue.*
JOHN'S GOSPEL, Vol. I. — PSALMS, Vol. III., ... *Eighth Issue.*

FIFTH YEAR, (1847.)

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS, Vol. III. — GENESIS, Vol. I., ... *Ninth Issue.*
PSALMS, Vol. V. — JOHN'S GOSPEL, Vol. II. (*completed,*) ..... *Tenth Issue.*

SIXTH YEAR, (1848.)

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS, Vol. IV. — CORINTHIANS, Vol. I., ... *Eleventh Issue.*
PSALMS, Vol. V., (*completed.*) — EZEKIEL, Vol. I., ... *Twelfth Issue.*

SEVENTH YEAR, (1849.)

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS, Vol. V., (*comp.*) — CORINTHIANS, Vol. II., (*comp.*) .. *Thirteenth Issue*
ROMANS, (New Translation—*completed.*) — TRACTS, Vol. II., ... *Fourteenth Issue*

EIGHTH YEAR, (1850.)

ISAIAH, Vol. I. — EZEKIEL, Vol. II., (*completed,*) ..... *Fifteenth Issue*
JEREMIAH, Vol. I. — GENESIS, Vol. II., (*completed,*) ..... *Sixteenth Issue*

NINTH YEAR, (1851.)

TRACTS, Vol. III. — PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, THESSALONIANS, (*completed,*) *Seventeenth Is*
JEREMIAH, Vol. II. — ISAIAH, Vol. II., ... *Eighteenth Issue*

TENTH YEAR, (1852.)

HARMONY OF THE PENTATEUCH, Vol. I. — DANIEL, Vol. I., ... *Nineteenth Is*
ISAIAH, Vol. III. — JEREMIAH, Vol. III., ... *Twentieth Issue*

PREPARING FOR THE ELEVENTH YEAR, (1853.)

DANIEL, Vol. II., (*completed.*) — HARMONY OF THE PENTATEUCH, Vol. II., *Twenty-First Issue*
ISAIAH, Vol. IV. — HEBREWS, (*completed,*) ..... *Twenty-Second Is*

☞ **The Works for the years 1854, 1855, and 1856, (comprising twelve additional volu are in active preparation for the press, and close the present Series.**

OFFICE OF THE CALVIN SOCIETY, 9, NORTHUMBERLAND ST., EDINBUR

ROBERT PITCAIRN, F.S.A. SCOT., *Secretary.*

COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

AND

THE LAMENTATIONS.

VOL. III.

THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.

INSTITUTED IN MAY M.DCCC.XLIII.

FOR PUBLICATION OF TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JOHN CALVIN.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION, ONE POUND, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE ON 1ST JANUARY.
FOUR VOLUMES: CIRCULATED IN TWO HALF-YEARLY ISSUES.

Acting and Editorial Secretary, Robert Pitcairn, F.S.A. Scot.
Calvin Office, 9, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.

2242

COMMENTARIES

ON THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

AND

THE LAMENTATIONS.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN, AND EDITED

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN,

VICAR OF THRUSSINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

VOLUME THIRD.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.
M.DCCC.LII.

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"I KNOW NO MAN, SINCE THE APOSTLES' DAYS, WHOM I VALUE AND HONOUR MORE THAN CALVIN, AND WHOSE JUDGMENT IN ALL THINGS, ONE WITH ANOTHER, I MORE ESTEEM AND COME NEARER TO."—*Richard Baxter.*

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

"HOWEVER MEN MAY DIFFER WITH REGARD TO THE CORRECTNESS, OR OTHERWISE, OF CALVIN'S OPINIONS AS TO GOD'S MIND RESPECTING US HIS CREATURES, THERE IS BUT ONE SENTIMENT OF HIS VALUE AS A CRITIC AND EXPOUNDER."—*Dr. Lewellin, Principal of St. David's College, Lampeter.*

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE derangement as to THE ORDER OF THE CHAPTERS first occurs in this Volume. It is commonly thought that chapters xxi., xxiv., and xxvii., were delivered in the time of ZEDEKIAH; while chapters xx., xxii., xxiii., xxv., and xxvi., contain Prophecies delivered in the previous reign of JEHOIAKIM. The early Versions and the *Targum* retain the same order with the *Hebrew*, only there are derangements of another kind both in the *Septuagint* and the *Arabic*, which commence at verse 14 of chapter xxv., and continue to the end of chapter li. It hence appears that the disorder had taken place early, before the Versions were made.

There are a few particulars to which the EDITOR wishes to draw the attention of Literary Readers, some of which have been already noticed in the NOTES appended to previous Volumes, though not perhaps so fully specified as to attract attention; and there is one subject which belongs especially to this Volume.

The FIRST thing is in reference to A HEBREW IDIOM; and that with regard to the pronoun relative אֲשֶׁר, who, which, whom. There is a peculiarity as to the use of this which has been overlooked, as far as the writer knows, by Grammarians. It precedes in Hebrew, as in other languages, the verb by which it is governed; but when it is not governed in a transitive sense, a personal pronoun follows the verb with a preposition prefixed to it, as, for instance, in Jer. i. 2, "To whom the word of the Lord came;" which is literally, "Whom the word of the Lord came to him." "To him" and "whom" are the same. It is an idiom, and the same exists in *Welsh*, which in many of its peculiarities corresponds exactly with the Hebrew. This passage, and others of a similar kind, are literally the same in that language, "Yr hwn y daeth gair yr Arglwydd atto;" and the last word, "atto," the preposition being prefixed to the pronoun, and

made, as it were, one word, corresponds exactly with the Hebrew.

We have, in Jer. vii. 10, these words—"Which (God's house) is called by my Name," literally, "which my Name is called on it;" which means, "on which my Name is called." The following are similar examples:—"Unto whom they offer incense;" literally, "whom they offer incense to them," (Jer. xi. 12;) "Against whom I have pronounced;" literally, "whom I have pronounced against them," (Jer. xviii. 8;) "Upon whose roofs they have burned incense;" literally, "which they have burned incense on their roofs," (Jer. xix. 13.) In all these instances the *Welsh* is literally the *Hebrew*. The last example is rather remarkable, but the *Welsh* is exactly the same, "y rhai yr arogldarthasant ar eu pennau." The verb, also, is similar, derived from the noun which means incense, "they have incensed;" but the verb in *English* is not so used. There is hardly a noun or a verb in *Hebrew* which the *Welsh* cannot literally express—a peculiarity which neither *Latin* nor *Greek* possesses, and perhaps no modern language. See also Gen. xliv. 5, 10, 16; xlviii. 15; Deut. xi. 24; xii. 2; Isaiah xxxi. 4; Jer. xiv. 15; xvii. 19; Amos ix. 12; Jonah iv. 10, 11.[1]

But it must be especially observed, as the point will be hereafter referred to, that when the relative pronoun is

[1] There is another peculiarity as to אשר, which may be mentioned, that is, when connected with a noun and rendered "whose," in the genitive case in our language. "Whose land the rivers have spoiled;" literally, "whom the rivers have spoiled her land." (Isaiah xviii. 2.) "Whose merchants *are* princes;" literally, "who—her merchants *are* princes." (Isaiah xxiii. 8.) Here, again, the *Welsh* is exactly the *Hebrew*, and in the first of these verses, the very order of the words is the same,—"Yr hon yr yspeiliodd yr avonydd ei thir." "Whose mouth speaketh vanity;" literally, "who—their mouth speaketh vanity." (Psalm cxliv. 8.) The *Welsh* is literally the same,—"Y rhai y llevara en genau wagedd;" the "who" is in apposition with "their," both being in *Hebrew* the same in every case. See also Deut. viii. 9; Psalm xcv. 4, 5; cxliv. 15; cxlvi. 5.

The following are similar instances:—"Whose seed was in itself;" literally, "which—its seed was in itself." (Gen. i. 12.) "In the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed;" literally, "which—in it *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed." (Gen. i. 29.) "Wherein is the breath of life;" literally, "which—in it *is* the breath of life." (Gen. vi. 17.) "Of beasts that *are* not clean;" literally, "of the beast which—not it *was* clean." (Gen. vii. 8.) "That hath statutes;" literally, "which to it *are* statutes." (Deut. iv. 8.) See Deut. xix. 1; Ruth iii. 2.

governed by the verb in a transitive sense, without a preposition, there is then no personal pronoun added after the verb, either affixed to it or separately. This seems to be an invariable rule,—"The land that I have given for an inheritance; אשר הנחלתי." (Jer. iii. 18.) "In the land that I gave; אשר נתתי." (Jer. vii. 7.) "My law which I set before them; אשר נתתי לפניהם." (Jer. ix. 13.) See also Psalms lxxviii. 69; lxxxvi. 9; cv. 5; Jer. vii. 23; ix. 16; xi. 10; xiii. 4; xv. 4; xvi. 13; Ezek. xviii. 27; Dan. ix. 10.

The SECOND point is connected with THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

1. THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARRANGE THEIR IDEAS.—They frequently mention, first, the effect, then the cause—first, the last act, then the previous act or acts—first, the deed or action, then the motive or what led to the deed—first, the later event, then the former—first, what is most evident and visible, then what is less ostensible and hidden. In all these instances, the order is the reverse of what is commonly found in other writers.

"My people is foolish," the effect; "they have not known me," the cause. (Jer. iv. 22.) "Before me continually is grief," the effect; "and wounds," the cause. (Jer. vi. 7.) "I sent them not," the last act; "neither have I commanded them," the preceding; "neither spake to them," the first. (Jer. xiv. 14.) "With an outstretched hand and a strong arm," the deed or action; "even in anger and in fury, and in great wrath," what led to the deed. (Jer. xxi. 5.) "The truth to Jacob," the later event; "and the mercy to Abraham," the former event. (Mic. vii. 20.) "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah?" the visible act; "hath thy soul loathed Zion?" the hidden reason. (Jer. xiv. 19.)

Similar instances are found in the New Testament. What is palpable and evident is stated first, then what leads to it, or the source from which it comes; as when St. Paul mentions "rioting" first, and then "drunkenness," which leads to it; and "strife" first, and then "envying," from which it proceeds. (Rom. xiii. 13.) In a like manner he puts "joy," the higher and the most manifest feeling, before "peace,"

which is the source of it. (Rom. xv. 13.) In Eph. vi. 23, the Apostle mentions "peace, love, and faith;" the right order is reversed—the most evident thing is first referred to. There are many passages which can be satisfactorily explained on no other principle.

2. THE ORDER IN WHICH SUBJECTS ARE OFTEN TREATED.—When two things are referred to, the last mentioned is first spoken of, and then the first. This is what is very commonly done. Pollution and going after Baalim are laid to the charge of Israel in Jer. ii. 23. To prove the last it is added, "See thy way in the valley;" and to bring connection as to the first, God says, "Know what thou hast done." In Jer. iv. 28, we have these words,—"I have spoken it, I have purposed it." The next sentence applies to the last, "and I will not repent," and the following to what he had spoken, "Neither will I turn back from it." Neighbour and brother are mentioned in Jer. ix. 4; the order is reversed in the latter clause of the verse. Pashur and the people of Judah are addressed in Jer. xx. 4; the doom of Judah is described in the following verse, and in the sixth the doom of Pashur. God speaks of "The way of life and of the way of death," in Jer. xxi. 8; in the next verse, such as would meet with death are first referred to, and then those to whom life would be granted. In Deut. xxvii. 11-26, and xxviii. 1-6, "blessing" and "curse" are mentioned, and then the "curse" is first described, and afterwards the "blessing." This mode of treating subjects is indeed so common that it would be useless to multiply examples; and there are not a few instances of the same kind in the New Testament.[1]

The THIRD subject is THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PASSAGE IN

[1] A few passages shall be referred to, and they shall be arranged in lines that the order may be more clearly seen,—

But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,
But ye are justified,
In the name of the Lord Jesus,
And by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

He mentions sanctification first, and then justification; the next line refers to justification, and the last to sanctification.

That if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe in thine heart, &c., &c.;

THIS VOLUME, IN CONNECTION WITH ANOTHER, WHICH WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE NEXT.—The two passages are Jer. xxiii. 6, and xxxiii. 16. The doctrine involved is important; but our business is to ascertain the real meaning according to the current diction of the language. These passages are not rendered alike in our Version, nor in the same sense; and yet it is evident from the context that the meaning of both passages must be the same, though the words are in some measure different. However we may differ from *Blayney*, he yet seems to have been at least so far right, as he renders them both in the same sense. His versions are the following:—

"And this is the Name by which Jehovah shall call him, Our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.)

"And this is he whom Jehovah shall call, Our Righteousness." (Jer. xxxiii. 16.)

In a Note on the last verse, it is said, "This is the strict grammatical translation of the words of the text." There is no doubt but that it may be so rendered; and here is an instance of what has been already observed as to the relative אשר. It has often after the verb a personal pronoun with a preposition prefixed; and as the verb קרא, whenever it means to name, has the preposition ל after it, so it has here. The relative and the pronoun in this case always refer to the

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,
And with the mouth confession is made, &c. (Rom. x. 9, 10.)

Confession and faith, and then faith and confession. This inversion seems to shew their inseparable connection, as in the former case as to sanctification and justification; and it is to be observed that in both instances the right order is given last; but the case is different in the following example:—

And he gave some apostles,
And some prophets, and some evangelists,
And some pastors and teachers;
For the perfecting of the saints,
For the work of the ministry,
For the edifying (or building) of the body of Christ.
(Eph. iv. 11, 12.)

The work of building the Church, which included especially the laying of the foundation, belonged to the Apostles; the ministerial work generally was performed by those called prophets and evangelists, who were the assistants of the Apostles; but the perfecting work, that of furthering the continual progress of the saints in a religious life, was carried on by stationary pastors and teachers. See similar instances in Matt. vii. 6, and 1 Cor. i. 24, 25.

same thing or person. Since this is the idiom of the language, it becomes evident that לה in this verse, is a masculine according to Chaldee dialect, as *Blayney* regards it, or a misprint for לו, according to three MSS.; for אשר, with which it is connected, has זה, "this," for its antecedent; and "this" is clearly the "king" mentioned in the previous verse.

The matter then is so far clear as to construction of this part of the verse; but whether "Jehovah" is the nominative to the verb is another question; and this we shall presently consider.

The words in the other passage, chap. xxiii. 6, are somewhat different. The word "Name" is in it; but it has no personal pronoun with a ל prefixed, which is ever the case when קרא, means to name, and when the word "name" is omitted. See Gen. xxi. 31; xxxv. 18; 1 Sam. xxiii. 28; 1 Chron. xi. 7; Jer. xxx. 17. But when "name" is connected with the verb in this sense, the preposition ל is not found. See Gen. xi. 9; xxix. 35; 1 Chron. iv. 9. This accounts for the absence of the pronoun with a ל prefixed coming after the verb in this passage, which is found in the other in which the word "name" is omitted. The אשר then here refers to the "name," and stands as it were in its place; and the literal rendering, if we adopt *Blayney's* arrangement of the words, would be as follows,—

And this *is* His Name, which Jehovah shall call it, Our Righteousness.

Now there is a grammatical objection to this rendering; for אשר, as before mentioned, when governed by a verb in the objective case, is never followed by a personal pronoun after the verb, either postfixed or separately. But here the ו in יקראו is made a pronoun, wholly contrary to the usage of the language in such a case as the present. The other passage may admit of *Blayney's* construction; but his version here is, as I conceive, inadmissible, being ungrammatical; the verb is in the plural number, and not in the singular, with an affixed pronoun, therefore Jehovah cannot be its nominative case.

It may then be asked, how is the passage to be translated? Let the reader bear in mind, that when the word "Name—שם," is connected with קרא, there is no preposition used; and as

אשר here has "Name" as its antecedent, it is not necessary to have a pronoun with a prefixed ל after the verb; but this is necessary in the other passage, for the word "name" is not given. Here we see a perfect consistency in the two passages, though differently worded. Then the true version of this passage I conceive to be the following,—

"And this is His Name, which they shall call, Jehovah our Righteousness."

But in our language it might be rendered, "by which they shall call *him*." The pronoun "they" refers to Judah and Israel, at the beginning of the verse. As then "Jehovah" cannot be here the nominative case to "call," there is no grammatical necessity to make it so in the other passage, though there is nothing contrary to the usage of the language in such a construction. The other passage may be rendered literally thus,—

"And this *is He*, whom it shall be called on Him, Jehovah our Righteousness."

The words in the idiom of our language may be thus correctly expressed, "who shall be called." But however awkward and even unintelligible the literal rendering may be in English, yet it is in *Welsh* both expressive and elegant. The phrase is word for word the same, and thoroughly idiomatic,—

"Ac eve *yw'r* hwn y gelwir arno, Jehova ein cyviawnder."[1]

[1] As to אשר, I may here state the result of a minute examination as to the Book of Psalms. It is found there as a relative, and as an adverb, about a hundred and seven times; about forty times as a nominative to verbs; nearly thirty times as an adverb or conjunction, *for*, *because*, *that*, *whom*, *how*, *whose*, &c.; in a few instances, in construction with nouns to which are affixed pronouns in the same case, as exemplified in a previous note; in twenty-six instances governed by verbs in the objective case, *without* any pronouns affixed to the verbs; and five times, according to our version, accompanied *by* pronouns when thus circumstanced. But in these five instances our version seems to me to be incorrect, the construction being inconsistent with what appears to be the common usage of the language. The passages are the following, Ps. i. 5; viii. 3; lxxxviii. 5; xciv. 12; and cvii. 2; אשר should be *when* in the first, *how* in the second, *where* in the third, *when* in the fourth, and *that* in the fifth, or *how*, as it is sometimes rendered in our version. In the first twelve chapters of Deuteronomy, there are at least a hundred instances of אשר being governed in a transitive sense; and in no case it has a corresponding pronoun after the verb, but there are several instances of this, when governed by an intransitive verb—such as the following, "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness," literally, "A land which without scarceness thou shalt in it eat bread."

We shall now refer to THE EARLY VERSIONS AND THE TARGUM.

In the *Septuagint*, the passage in chapter xxiii. 6, is rendered substantially according to what is done by *Blayney;* he indeed defends himself by appealing to that version. As to the passage in chapter xxxiii. 16, it is wanting in the *Septuagint;* as supplied in the *Complutensian* Edition, it is evidently a version of the *Vulgate*, as is the case in other instances; and as given by *Theodoret*, it is as follows,—

"This is He who shall be called (ὁ καλεῖσθαι) The Lord our Righteousness."

The *Vulgate* version is the same in both places,—

"And this is the Name which they shall call him, Our righteous Lord."

The *Syriac* version is the same in both places,—

"And this is the Name by which they shall call Him, The Lord our Righteousness."

The *Arabic* version is the same with the preceding, only "righteousness" is not translated; it is "The Lord Josedek." It is wanting like the *Septuagint* as to the second passage.

The paraphrase of the *Targum* is substantially the same as to both places,—

"And this is the Name by which they shall call Him, Done shall be righteousness for us from the presence of the Lord in His days."

It appears then from all the Early Versions, except the *Septuagint* as to the first passage, and from the *Targum*, that "JEHOVAH" is not connected with the verb to call, but with "righteousness;" and this, as we have seen, comports with what the usage of the language requires. There can therefore be no reasonable doubt as to the real meaning of these two passages.

As to THE PECULIAR IDIOMS OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, the *Septuagint* version of Jeremiah and of the minor prophets, is by no means so satisfactory as the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac* versions. This is what the Editor can testify after a minute examination.

J. O.

THRUSSINGTON, *September*, 1852.

COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

Lecture Seventy-Fifth.

CHAPTER XX.

1. Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who *was* also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

2. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the Lord.

1. Et audivit Phassur filius Immer sacerdos et ipse præfectus erat (dux) in Templo (in æde) Jehovæ, Jeremiam vaticinantem (prophetantem) hos sermones:

2. Et percussit Phassur Jeremiam Prophetam, et posuit eum in cippum (*vel*, in carcerem; *sed mihi magis placet nomen carceris*) qui erat in porta Benjamin superiore, quæ spectabat ad ædem Jehovæ.

JEREMIAH relates here what sort of reward he had received for his prophecy,—that he had been smitten and cast into prison, not by the king or by his courtiers, but by a priest who had the care of the Temple. It was a grievous and bitter trial when God's servant found that he was thus cruelly treated by one of the sacred order, who was of the same tribe, and his colleague; for the priests who were then in office had not been without right appointed, for God had chosen them. As, then, their authority was founded on the Law and on God's inviolable decree, Jeremiah might well have been much terrified; for this thought might have occurred to him,—"What can be the purpose of God? for he has set priests of the tribe of Levi over his Temple and over his whole people. Why, then, does he not rule them by his Spirit? Why does he not render them fit for their office?

Why does he suffer his Temple, and the sacred office which he so highly commends to us in his Law, to be thus profaned? or why, at least, does he not stretch forth his hand to defend me, who am also a priest, and sincerely engaged in my calling?" For we know that God commands in his Law, as a proof that the priests had supreme power, that whosoever disobeyed them should be put to death. (Deut. xvii. 12.) "Since, then, it was God's will to endue the priests with so much authority and power, why therefore did he not guide them by his grace, that they might faithfully execute the office committed to them?" Nor was Jeremiah alone moved and shaken by this trial, but all who then truly worshipped God. Small, indeed, was the number of the godly; but there was surely no one who was not astonished at such a spectacle as this.

Pashur was not the chief priest, though he was of the first order of priests; and it is probable that Immer, his father, was the high priest, and that he was his vicar, acting in his stead as the ruler of the Temple.[1] However this may have been, he was no doubt superior, not only to the Levites, but also to the other priests of his order. Now this person, being of the same order and family, rose up against Jeremiah, and not only condemned in words a fellow-priest, but treated him outrageously, for he smote the Prophet. This was unworthy of his station, and contrary to the rights of sacred fellowship; for if the cause of Jeremiah was bad, yet a priest ought to have pursued a milder course; he might have cast

[1] The account which *Blayney* gives is the most probable: that he was the first of his order. There were twenty-four courses of priests, as appointed by David, 1 Chron. xxiv.; and the head of each course was for the time the ruler or governor of the Temple. These heads of the courses were no doubt the "chief priests" mentioned in the New Testament, for in fact there was only one chief priest. They were also called the "captains" of the Temple. "The chief overseer in the house of Jehovah" is the most suitable rendering. The whole verse might be rendered as follows,—"When Pashur, the son of Immer, the priest, while he was the chief overseer in the house of Jehovah, heard Jeremiah prophesying these words, then Pashur smote Jeremiah," &c. So the *Syriac*, and so does *Blayney* connect the first with the second verse. The family of "Immer" formed the sixteenth course. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 14. "The priest" refers to Pashur, and not to "Immer;" and it is so rendered by the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and the *Arab.*, though not by the *Syr.* Immer was the name of the family.—*Ed.*

him into prison, that if found guilty, he might afterwards be condemned. But to smite him was not the act of a priest, but of a tyrant, of a ruffian, or of a furious man.

We may hence learn in what a disorder things were at that time; for in a well-ordered community the judge does not leap from his tribunal in order to strike a man, though he might deserve a hundred deaths, as regard ought to be had to what is lawful. Now, if a judge, whom God has armed with the sword, ought not thus to give vent to his wrath and without discretion use the sword, it is surely a thing wholly inconsistent with the office of a priest. Then the state of things must have been then in very great disorder, when a priest thus disgraced himself. And from his precipitant rage we may also gather that good men were then very few. He had been chosen to preside over the Temple; he must then have excelled others not only as to his station, but also in public esteem and in the possession of some kind of virtues. But we see how he was led away by the evil spirit.

These things we ought carefully to consider, for it happens sometimes that great commotions arise in the Church of God, and those who ought to be moderators are often carried away by a blind and, as it were, a furious zeal. We may then stumble, and our faith may wholly fail us, except such an example as this affords us aid, which shews clearly that the faithful were formerly tried and had their faith exercised by similar contests. It is not then uselessly said that *Pashur smote Jeremiah.* Had he struck one of the common people, it would have been more endurable, though in that case it would have been an act wholly unworthy of his office; but when he treated insolently the servant of God, and one who had for a long time discharged the prophetic office, it was far less excusable. This circumstance, then, ought to be noticed by us, that the priest dared to strike the Prophet of God.

It then follows that Jeremiah was cast by him *into prison.* But we must notice this, that he had *heard* the words of Jeremiah before he became infuriated against him. He ought, doubtless, to have been moved by such a prophecy; but he became mad and so audacious as to smite God's Prophet.

It hence appears how great is the stupidity of those who have once become so hardened as to despise God; for even the worst of men are terrified when God's judgment is announced. But Pashur heard Jeremiah proclaiming the evil that was near at hand; and yet the denunciation had no other effect on him but to render him worse. As, then, he thus violently assailed God's Prophet, after having heard his words, it is evident that he was blinded by a rage wholly diabolical. We also see that the despisers of God blend light with darkness, for Pashur covered his impiety with a cloak, and hence cast Jeremiah into prison; for in this way he shewed that he wished to know the state of the case, as he brought him out of prison the following day. Thus the ungodly ever try to make coverings for their impiety; but they never succeed. The hypocrisy of Pashur was very gross when he cast Jeremiah into prison, in order that he might afterwards call him to defend his cause, for he had already smitten him. This great insolence, then, took away every pretence for justice. It was therefore extremely frivolous for Pashur to have recourse afterwards to some form of trial for deciding the case.

The word מהפכת, *mephicat*, is rendered by some, fetter; and by others, stocks; and they think it to be a piece of wood, with one hole to confine the neck, and another the feet. But I know not whether this is suitable here, for Jeremiah says that it was in the higher gate of Benjamin. This certainly could not be properly said of fetters, or of chains, or of stocks. It then follows that it was a prison.[1] He men-

[1] The versions differ—"dungeon" is the *Sept.*; "stocks-nervum" is the *Vulg.*; and "circle," or "circuit," is the *Syr.*; but the *Targ.* has "prison." The word occurs in two other places, in 1 Chron. xxix. 26, and in 2 Chron. xvi. 10, and is rendered "prison." *Venema* renders it "the torturing prison," taking the verb from which the word comes in a bad sense, as signifying to distort, and hence to torture. *Symmachus* favours this view, for he renders it "a place of torment—βασανιστήριον," and "a rack—στρεβλωτήριον." The form of the expression is in favour of this idea, "and set him in the stocks," or on the rack. And so in chap. xxix. 26, the rendering ought to be—"that thou shouldest set him on the stocks (or rack) and in prison." Of what kind was this instrument of torture it is not known. Prisons had especially three names—"the house of roundness (הסהר);" "the house of confinement (הכלא);" and "the house of the rack, or stocks, (המהפכת)." See Gen. xxxix. 20; 1 Kings xxii. 27; and 2 Chron. xvi 10. But "the house" is not here connected with the word;

tions the *gate of Benjamin*, as it belonged to that tribe; for we know that a part of Jerusalem was inhabited by the Benjamites. They had two gates, and this was the higher gate towards the east. He says that it was opposite *the house of Jehovah;* for besides the court there were many small courts, as it is well known, around the Temple. It follows:—

3. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib.

3. Et accidit postridie (die crastino) ut educeret Phassur Jeremiam e carcere; et dixit ei Jeremias, Non Phassur vocavit Jehova nomen tuum, sed potius terrorem undique.

No doubt Pashur called other priests to examine the case. It was, indeed, a specious pretence, for he seemed as though he did not wish to condemn the holy Prophet hastily, or without hearing his defence. But Jeremiah only says briefly that he was brought out of prison: we at the same time gather that he was not dismissed, for he was summoned before Pashur to give a reason for his prophecy.

But here the Prophet shews that he was not cast down or disheartened, though he had been most contemptuously treated; he bore patiently the buffetings and stripes he had received, and also his incarceration. We know that such outrages are so bitter to ingenuous minds, that they can hardly sustain them. But Jeremiah teaches us, by his own example, that our constancy and firmness ought not to be weakened though the whole world loaded or almost overwhelmed us with reproaches. We ought, then, to understand that courage of mind ought not to fail or be weakened in God's servants, however wickedly and contumeliously they may be treated by the world. For Jeremiah, when he came out of prison, spoke more boldly than before; nor was he beyond the reach of danger. Courage increases when one obtains the victory, and he can then safely and securely insult his enemies; but Jeremiah was yet a captive, though he had been brought out of prison, and he might have been afterwards cast there again and treated more cruelly than

and therefore it must mean the instrument of torture itself. Had the prison been intended, the word "house," as in 2 Chron. xvi. 10, would have been placed before it. It is at the same time probable that the prison was the place where the rack or the stocks were.—*Ed.*

before. But neither the wrong he had received, nor the fear of new contumely, deterred him from denouncing God's judgment on the ungodly priest. Such magnanimity becomes all God's servants, so that they ought not to feel shame, nor grow soft, nor be disheartened, when the world treats them with indignity and reproach; nor ought they to fear any dangers, but advance courageously in the discharge of their office.

It must in the second place be noticed,—that God's Prophet here closes his eyes to the splendour of the priestly office, which otherwise might have hindered him to denounce God's judgment. And this ought to be carefully observed; for we know the ungodly lie hid under masks, as the case is in the present day with the Pope and all his filthy clergy: for what do they allege but the name of Catholic Church and perpetual priesthood and apostolical dignity? Doubtless, Pashur was of the priestly order; but what the Papacy is, the Scripture neither mentions nor teaches, except that it condemns it as altogether filthy and abominable. And the Levitical priesthood, as I have said, was founded on God's Law; and yet Jeremiah, guided by the command of God, hesitated not severely to reprove the priest and to treat him as he deserved. It is, therefore, then only that we rightly and faithfully discharge the prophetic office, when we shew no respect of persons, and disregard those external masks by which the ungodly deceive the simple, and are haughty towards God while they falsely pretend his name.[1]

Now he says, *Jehovah has called thy name not Pashur, but terror on every side.* Some render the words, "Because there will be terror to thee on every side;" but incorrectly, for in the next verse a reason is given which explains what the Prophet means. Jeremiah no doubt had a regard to the meaning of the word Pashur, otherwise it would have been unmeaning and even foolish to say, "Thy name shall be

[1] I would render the verse thus:—

3. And it happened on the morrow that Pashur brought out Jeremiah from the stocks; and Jeremiah said to him,—
Not Pashur does Jehovah call thy name,
But, Terror on every side.

I take קרא to be a participle, and not a verb in the past tense.—*Ed.*

called not Pashur, but terror on every side." Interpreters have expounded the word Pashur as meaning an increasing prince, or one who extends power, deriving it from פָּשָׁה, *peshe*, to increase, and transitively, to extend; and they add to it the word שַׂר, *sher*, which means a prince; and so they render it, a prince extending power, or a prince who increases. But as there is some doubt as to the points, I know not whether this etymology can be maintained. I am more inclined to derive the word from פָּשַׁח, *peshech*, to cut or break. It is indeed but once found in this sense in Scripture, but often in the Chaldee language. However this may be, it is taken in this sense once by Jeremiah in the third chapter of Lamentations.[1] And hence by a metaphor it means to open; and א, *aleph*, may be deemed quiescent in the second word, so that it means one who breaks or opens the light. The words which follow—"terror on every side" —induce and compel me to give this interpretation. He does not say that he would be a terror on every side; but that terrors surrounded him, מִסָּבִיב, *mesabib*, so that there was no escape. As then the name of Pashur was honourable, signifying to open light, he mentions this, (it is indeed a metaphor, by which breaking means opening:) as then he had this name, which means to bring forth light, Jeremiah says, "Thou shalt be called a terror on every side;" that is, a terror that so surrounds all that no escape is possible.[2] We see that the contrast is most suitable between the open-

[1] The word is not spelt with ה, but with ח; it is "Pashchur." Therefore, the former derivation cannot be admitted. *Venema* derives it from פּוּשׁ, to be proud, or ferocious, and חוּר, which means "white," or splendid; then the meaning is, "splendid prince." *Gataker* seems to prefer the opinion of those who derive the word from פּשׁ, diffusion, and חוּר, paleness, because he diffused, or spread fear, which produces paleness to all around. Instead of this, a terror, the cause of paleness, would be to him and to all his friends, as stated in the following verse.—*Ed.*

[2] The *Vulg.* alone gives this meaning to the phrase; the *Sept.* has "μέτοικον—emigrant," and the *Syr.* "stranger and wanderer." And then in the fourth verse both these versions give a correspondent meaning. "I will deliver thee into emigration (or captivity) with all thy friends." That this word, rendered "terror," may be derived from גּוּר, which means to sojourn, to peregrinate, is undeniable; as a participle noun from Hiphil, it may mean a sojourner, or an emigrant. The word in this sense is found often in the plural number. See Gen. xlvii. 9; Exod. vi. 4. But the phrase, as found here, occurs four times in this book, where it

ing of light and that terror which spread on every side, so that there is no opening and no escape; and the explanation follows:

4. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold *it*: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

4. Quia sic dicit **Jehova**, **Ecce ego pono te in terrorem tibi et omnibus amicis tuis: et cadent per gladium hostium tuorum, oculi tui videntes,** (*al. est*, oculis tuis videntibus,) **et totum Jehudah tradam in manum regis Babylonis, et transferet eos** (*vel.* traducet) **Babylonem, et percutiet eos gladio.**

Here Jeremiah explains more at large why he said that Pashur would be terror on every side, even because he and his friends would be in fear; for he would find himself overwhelmed by God's vengeance, and would become a spectacle to all others. In short, Jeremiah means, that such would be God's vengeance as would fill Pashur and all others with fear; for Pashur himself would be constrained to acknowledge God's hand without being able to escape, and all others would also perceive the same. He then became a spectacle to himself and to others, because he could not, however hardened he might have been, do otherwise than feel God's vengeance; and this became also apparent to all others.

Behold, he says, *I will make thee a terror to thyself and to all thy friends; and fall shall they by the sword of their enemies, thine eyes seeing it; and all Judah will I deliver into the hand*, &c. He repeats what he had said; for Pashur wished to be deemed the patron of the whole land, and especially of the city Jerusalem. As, then, he had undertaken the cause of the people, as though he was the patron and defender of them all, Jeremiah says, that all the Jews would be taken captives, and not only so, but that something more grievous was nigh at hand, for when the king of Babylon led them into exile, he would also smite them with the sword, not indeed all; but we know that he severely punished the king, his children, and the chief men, so that

can have no other meaning than "terror (or fear) on every side," ch. vi. 25; xx. 10; xlvi. 5; xlix. 29; and it occurs once elsewhere, in Psalm xxxi. 13; where also its meaning is evident from the context.—*Ed.*

the lower orders on account of their obscurity alone escaped; and those of this class who did escape, because they were not noble nor renowned, were indebted to their own humble condition. It follows,—

5. Moreover, I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.

5 Et ponam totam fortitudinem urbis hujus, et omnem laborem ejus, et omnem pretiosum ejus, (*vel*, omnem gloriam,) et omnes thesauros regum Jehudah ponam in manum inimicorum ipsorum, et spoliabunt ipsos et tollent eos et abducent eos Babylonem.

He goes on with the same subject, but amplifies what he had said in order to confirm it. At the same time there is no doubt but that Pashur was more exasperated when he heard these grievous threatenings; but it was right thus to inflame more and more the fury of all the ungodly. Though, then, they may a hundred times raise a clamour, we must not desist from freely and boldly declaring the truth. This is the reason why the Prophet now more fully describes the future calamity of the city.

I will give up, he says, the whole strength *of this city*, &c. This word "strength" is sometimes taken metaphorically for riches or wealth. Then *the whole strength*, or substance, *of this city and all its labour will I give up*, &c. This second clause is still more grievous, for what had been acquired with great labour was to be given to plunder; for when any one becomes rich without labour, that is, when riches come to one by inheritance, without any trouble or toil, he is not so distressed when he happens to be deprived of his wealth; but he who has through a whole life of labour obtained what he expects would be for the support of life, this person grieves much more and becomes really distressed with anguish, when enemies come and deprive and plunder him of all he possesses. There is therefore no doubt but that "labour" is here mentioned, as in other parts of Scripture, in order to amplify the evil. He then adds, *all its precious things and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I deliver into the hand of their enemies; who* will carry away, not only

riches, labour, and treasures, but also the men themselves, and *bring them to Babylon.*[1] The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that we may not by our perverseness increasingly provoke thy wrath, but that whenever thou threatenest us, we may immediately fear and tremble at thy word, and also obey thee in the true spirit of meekness, and so dread thy threatenings as to anticipate thy judgment by true repentance, and thus strive to glorify thy name, that thou mayest become our strength and glory, and that we may be able not only before the world, but before thee and thy angels, really to glory, that we are that peculiar people whom thou hast favoured with thy adoption, that thou mayest to the end carry on in us the work of thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

[1] What *Calvin* and our version render "strength," is rendered the same by the *Sept.*, ἰσχὺν,—by the *Vulg.*, "substance,"—by the *Syr.*, "citadels,"—and by the *Targ.*, riches. The primary meaning of the word is to be strong, or firm; and then what is strongly, or firmly secured—store, or treasure, as in Prov. xv. 6, and in other places. "Store" would be the best word here, and the two things which follow are explanatory of this store,—the labour, or the fruit of labour,—their garments; and precious things,—their gold, silver, and precious stones and furniture:—

5. And I will give the whole store of this city,
Even all the fruit of its labour,
And every precious thing in it,—
Yea, all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give,
Into the hand of their enemies:
And they shall plunder them and take them,
And bring them into Babylon.

All the versions refer "them" in the two last lines to the people, but the *Targum* to the things mentioned in the preceding lines; but the former view is the right one. To render the last verb to "carry," as in our version, is not correct; for it means to cause to come, and hence to bring; and this clearly supports the versions.

The exposition of *Blayney* is, that by "strength" is meant the military, by "labour" the workmen, and by "the precious" the respectable part of society. Then he ought to have gone on and said, that by "the treasures" were meant the kings of Judah! But all this is fancy, and wholly inconsistent with the tenor of the passage. They were to "plunder" them; and if their stores were not referred to, how could this be said of what their enemies would do? And then, according to this view, the treasures of the kings were to become a spoil, and not the stores of the city. To spoil the people of their property was one of the most common threatenings of the Prophets.—*Ed.*

Lecture Seventy-Six.

6. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house, shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

6. Et tu Phashur et omnes habitatores domus tuæ (*hoc est*, omnes domestici tui) venietis in captivitatem; tu venies Babylonem, et illic morieris, et illic sepelieris, et omnes amici tui, quibus vaticinatus es in mendacio.

Now Jeremiah declares that Pashur himself would be a proof, that he had truly foretold the destruction of the city and the desolation of the whole land. He had indeed before exposed his vanity; but he now brings the man himself before the public; for it was necessary to exhibit a remarkable instance, that all might know that God's judgment ought to have been dreaded.

Though that impostor flattered the people, yet Jeremiah says, that he and all his domestics would be led into captivity; that is, that the whole family would be as it were a spectacle, so that all the Jews might see that Pashur would be brought to nothing. "Let all the Jews then know," he seems to have said, "that he is a false prophet."

But what follows might have raised a question; for Jeremiah declares as a punishment, that Pashur dying in Babylon would be buried there; but he had said before, "I will give their carcases for meat to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the earth;" and now it is not consistent in the Prophet to represent that as a punishment which is reckoned as one of God's favours. In answer to this, let it be especially noticed, that God does not always punish the ungodly alike, or in the same way. He would have some to be cast away unburied, as they were unworthy of that common lot of humanity; but he would have others buried, but for a different purpose; for there is weight in the particle *there*, for Babylon is put in contrast with the holy land. Whosoever were buried in the land of Canaan, had even in their death a pledge of the eternal inheritance; for as it is well known, God wished them while they lived so to enjoy the land, that they might look forward to heaven. Hence burial in the land of Canaan was as it were a visible mark or

symbol of God's adoption, as though all the children of Abraham were gathered into his bosom until they arose into a blessed and immortal life. Hence Pashur, by being buried in Babylon, became an outcast from God's Church; for it was in a manner a repudiation, as though God would thus openly put on him a mark of infamy.

If it be objected and said, that the same thing happened to Daniel, and to some of the best servants of God, and that Jeremiah himself was buried in Egypt, which was far worse; the answer we give is this,—that temporal punishments which happen to the elect and God's children for their good do in a manner change their nature as to them; though, indeed, it must be held, that all punishments are evidences of the wrath and curse of God. Whatever evils then happen to us in this life ought to be regarded as the fruits of sin, as though God thereby shewed himself openly to be displeased with us. This is one thing. Then, when poverty, famine, diseases, and exile, and even death itself, are viewed in themselves, we must always say that they are the curses of God, that is, when they are regarded, as I have said, in their own nature. But God consecrates these punishments as to his own children, so they turn to their benefit, and thereby cease to be curses. Whenever then God declares, "Thou shalt be unburied," it is no wonder that this dishonour should be deemed an evidence of his wrath and a proof of his curse. And farther, whenever he formerly said thus, "Thou shalt be buried out of the holy land," it was also an evidence of his curse, that is, with regard to the reprobate. At the same time God turned to good whatever might otherwise be a curse to his elect; and hence Paul says, that all things turn out for good and benefit to the faithful, who love God. (Rom. viii. 28.)

Now, then, we understand why the Prophet says, that Pashur would be *buried* in Babylon; nor is there a doubt but that there was more disgrace in that burial, than if his body was cast out and devoured by wild beasts; for God intended to render him conspicuous, that all might for a long time turn their eyes to him, according to what is said in Psalm lix. 12, "Slay them not, O God, for thy people

may forget them." God then intended that the life and death of Pashur should be a memorial, in order that the minds of the people might be more impressed. At the same time, were the word burial taken in a wider sense, there would be nothing wrong, as though it was said, "There shall his carcase lie until it becomes putrified."

Then Jeremiah adds, *Thou and thy friends to whom thou hast prophesied falsely.*[1] This passage teaches us that a just reward is rendered to the ungodly who wish to be deceived, when they sustain a twofold judgment from God. Behold, then, what all the wicked who seek flatterers that promise them wonderful things, gain for themselves! they thus earn for themselves a heavier vengeance. The more they strive to put afar off God's judgment, the more, no doubt, they increase and inflame it. This is the reason why the Prophet denounces a special judgment on the friends of Pashur, to whom he had prophesied; they had wilfully laid hold on those false promises by which he had flattered them, so that they boldly despised God. Since, then, they wished of their own accord to be thus deceived, it was right that these deceptions through which they slandered the prophetic threatenings, and which they usually set up as a shield against them, should bring on them a heavier punishment. It then follows—

7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art	7. Decepisti me, Jehova, et deceptus sum; vim intulisti mihi, et

[1] This verse ought to be thus arranged,—

6. And thou, Pashur, and all who dwell in thine house,
Go shall ye into captivity:
Yea, to Babylon shalt thou go,
And there shalt thou die, and there be buried—
Thou and all thy friends,
To whom thou hast prophesied falsely.

There is here an instance of the free and unmodified manner in which statements are often made in Scripture. It is said in ver. 4, that "his friends" would fall by the sword; but here, that they would be carried into Babylon, die, and be buried there. The hearers of Jeremiah, no doubt, understood him, though a captious hearer could have made out a contradiction against him. But the meaning is, that *many* of them would be slain by the sword, and that *many* of them, or *most* of such as remained, would be led into captivity. A great number were to be slain, and a great number would be taken captives.—*Ed.*

cause God would deny himself, if he destroyed the truth of his word.

We now, then, perceive that the Prophet did not exceed what was right, when he dared to elevate himself, so as to become in a manner the associate of God, that is, as to the truth of which God was the author and he the minister.

But from this passage a useful doctrine may be gathered. All who go forth to teach ought to be so sure of their calling, as not to hesitate to appeal to God's tribunal whenever any dispute happens. It is indeed true, that even the best servants of God may in some things be mistaken, or be doubtful in their judgment; but as to their calling and doctrine there ought to be that certainty which Jeremiah exhibits to us here by his own example.

He afterwards adds, *Thou hast constrained me.* By saying that he had been *deceived,* he meant this,—"O God, if I am an impostor, thou hast made me so; if I have deceived, thou hast led me; for I have derived from thee all that I have; it hence follows, that thou art in fault, and less excusable than I am, if there be anything wrong in me." Afterwards, as I have said, he enlarges on this,—that God *constrained* him; for he had not coveted the prophetic office, but being constrained, undertook it; for he could not have rejected or cast off the burden laid on him. He then expresses two things,—that he had brought no fancies of his own, nor invented anything of what he had said, but had been the instrument of God's Spirit, and delivered what he had received as from hand to hand: this is one thing. And then he adds,—that had he his free choice, he would not have undertaken the prophetic office; for he had been drawn as it were by constraint to obey God in this respect. We now then perceive the meaning of Jeremiah.

Were any to ask, whether it could be deemed commendable in the Prophet thus constrainedly to undertake his office; to this the plain answer is,—that a general rule is not here laid down, as though it were necessary for all to be thus unwillingly drawn. But though Jeremiah might not have been faultless in this respect, yet he might have justly testified this before men. And we have seen at the beginning, that

through his own sloth extinguished, as far as he could, the light of the Holy Spirit, how much more ought we to fear, lest the same thing should happen to us? Let us then rouse the sparks of this fervour, until it inflame us, so that we may faithfully devote ourselves altogether to the service of God; and if at any time we become slothful, let us stimulate ourselves, and may the power of the Holy Spirit be so revived, that we may to the end pursue the course of our office and never stand still, but assail even the whole world, knowing that God commands us and requires from us what others disapprove and condemn.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as at this day a greater and viler impiety breaks forth than at any age, and thy sacred truth is treated with derision by many of Satan's drudges,—O grant, that we may nevertheless constantly persevere in it, nor hesitate to oppose the fury of all the ungodly, and relying on the power of thy Spirit, contend with them until that truth, which thou didst once proclaim by thy Prophets, and at length by thine only-begotten Son, and which was sealed by his blood, may attain its full authority, that as it proves to many the savour of eternal death, so it may also be a pledge to us of eternal salvation, until we shall be gathered into thy kingdom at the coming of the same thy Son Jesus Christ.—Amen.

Lecture Seventy-Seventh.

10. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

10. Quia audivi contumeliam multorum, terrorem undique, Nuntiate et nuntiabimus: omnis vir (*id est*, omnes homines, homo pacis, *ad verbum*, אנוש omnes homines) pacis meæ (*id est*. familiares mei, *qui debuerant colere mecum amicitiam*) observant latus meum (*vel*, claudicationem, *metaphorice et melius*,) si forte erret, et prævaleamus ei, et sumamus ultionem nostram ex eo.

JEREMIAH proceeds with the same subject, and before God accuses his enemies,—that they disgracefully contended with him, though he deserved no such treatment, for he had endeavoured to secure as far as he could their safety. He then

cause God would deny himself, if he destroyed the truth of his word.

We now, then, perceive that the Prophet did not exceed what was right, when he dared to elevate himself, so as to become in a manner the associate of God, that is, as to the truth of which God was the author and he the minister.

But from this passage a useful doctrine may be gathered. All who go forth to teach ought to be so sure of their calling, as not to hesitate to appeal to God's tribunal whenever any dispute happens. It is indeed true, that even the best servants of God may in some things be mistaken, or be doubtful in their judgment; but as to their calling and doctrine there ought to be that certainty which Jeremiah exhibits to us here by his own example.

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Were any to ask, whether it could be deemed commendable in the Prophet thus constrainedly to undertake his office; to this the plain answer is,—that a general rule is not here laid down, as though it were necessary for all to be thus unwillingly drawn. But though Jeremiah might not have been faultless in this respect, yet he might have justly testified this before men. And we have seen at the beginning, that

when God appointed him a teacher to his Church, he refused as far as he could the honour, "Ah! Lord," he said, "I know not how to speak." (i. 6.) Though then he was constrained by God's authority, and as it were, led by force, and though he may have shewed in this respect that he was not free from fault or weakness; yet he might have rightly pleaded this against his enemies.

He then says, that he was *a scorn continually, and was derided by all.* The Prophet no doubt tried here to find out whether any portion of the people was still reclaimable; for to hear that God was charged with falsehood, that the Prophet's office was rendered void by the wilfulness and audacity of men, was much calculated to rouse their minds. When, therefore, they heard this, they must surely have been terrified, if they had a particle of true religion or of right knowledge. Hence the Prophet wished to make the trial, whether there were any remaining who were capable of being reclaimed. But his object also was to shew, that their wickedness was inexpiable, if they continued wickedly and proudly to oppose his doctrine.[1]

[1] I find none agreeing with *Calvin* in his view of this verse; nor many with our version in rendering the first verb "deceived." So is the *Septuagint*, but the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Targum* have "enticed." In other parts it is rendered in our version "enticed," "allured," and "persuaded." *Blayney* has "allured," but *Gataker* and *Lowth* prefer "persuaded;" and this wholly comports with the view the Prophet gives of his calling in the first chapter, to which he evidently refers, and also with what follows in this verse. He was unwilling to undertake the office, but he was induced to do so by what God said to him. There was nothing like deception in the case; for God had previously told him of the difficulties he would have to encounter. And then he adds, that he was "constrained," which I consider to be the meaning of the next verb. He had been persuaded by reasons and promises, and constrained by authority. I would render the verse thus,—

7. Thou didst persuade me, O Jehovah, and I was persuaded;
Thou didst constrain me, and didst prevail:
I am become a derision every day;
The whole of it are jeering me.

The "it" refers to the city where he was, and of which he speaks at the end of the last chapter; for this chapter is but a continuation of the narrative. What he relates there of the fate of the city drew the attention and excited the rage of Pashur. After having spoken of what Pashur did, Jeremiah gives utterance here to his complaints.

Blayney renders the last line thus, and is approved by *Horsley*,—

And we ought carefully to notice this; for this passage has not only been written, that we may be instructed in the fear of God; but the Holy Spirit continually proclaims against all despisers, and openly accuses them, that they offer to God the atrocious insult of charging him with falsehood and deception. Let us then know that a dreadful judgment is here denounced on all those profane men who despise God's word and treat it with derision; for the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Jeremiah openly proclaims, as I have said, before God's tribunal, that God is made by them a liar. It afterwards follows,—

8. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

9. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name: but *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

8. Quia ex quo locutus sum, vociferor violentiam et vastationem clamo; quia fuit sermo Jehovæ mihi in opprobrium et in contumeliam toto die (*vel*, quotidie, assiduè, *ut dictum est.*)

9. Et dixi (itaque dixi, *copula enim illativam valet*) non recordabor et non loquar amplius in nomine ejus; et fuit in corde meo quasi ignis ardens, clausus in ossibus meis, et fatigatus sum ferendo et non potui.

The Prophet says here that he found no fruit from his labours, but on the contrary, he saw that all his efforts and endeavours had an opposite effect; for they exasperated all the Jews, inflamed their rage, and drove them into a greater licentiousness in sinning. Hence he says, that he purposed to give up the office assigned to him, but that by a secret impulse he was constrained to persevere, and that thus he was not at liberty to desist from the course which he had begun.

But the verse is variously explained; *From the time I spoke, I cried violence aloud and proclaimed devastation.* Thus some take the words, as though Jeremiah said, that since he began to teach he uttered complaints; for he saw that he was violently assailed and was exposed to all kinds of wrongs: but this view appears to me too frigid. Others

Ridicule hath spent its whole force upon me.

All the versions and the *Targum* regard כלה, not as a verb, but as signifying "all," or every one; and the proposed rendering is too refined.—*Ed.*

come nearer to the truth who consider him as saying, that he had not ceased to cry against outrages and plunders, when he saw that all kinds of wickedness prevailed among the people; as though he had said, "I could not mildly and peaceably teach them, for their disposition and temper prevented me, but their wickedness compelled me to treat them with severity, as all God's servants ought wisely to consider what the state of the Church requires." If indeed we should in tranquil times cry aloud, it would be mad affectation; and this is what is done by many, who without thought and without any reason always make a great cry; but when we see Satan reigning, we ought not then to withhold nor to act as in a truce; but as it is an open war it is necessary to cry aloud. They who take this view, then, understand that Jeremiah cried aloud, because he saw that the people were refractory, and also saw that things were so bad that they could not be restored to a right state without the greatest sharpness and vehemence.

But I rather think that the Prophet had another kind of trial,—that he brought down a greater vengeance of God by his cries, as though he had said, "To what purpose should I furnish God with weapons by my preaching? since I do nothing but increase his wrath, which will at length fulminate and consume the whole land together with the people." He then says, that he cried violence and devastation aloud, for impiety itself is a sort of hostile violence by which God is provoked. The meaning is, that the Prophet saw no other fruit to his labour, but that men were rendered more insolent, and from being thieves became robbers, and from being disdainful became ruffians, so that they increasingly kindled God's wrath, and more fully abandoned themselves. This was indeed a most severe and dangerous trial; it is therefore no wonder that the Prophet says, that it came to his mind to turn aside from his office as a teacher.

Now this passage is especially worthy of being observed; for not only teachers are influenced by this feeling, but all the godly without exception. For when we see that men are, as it were, made worse through God's word, we begin to doubt whether it be expedient to bury every remembrance

of God and to extinguish his word, rather than to increase the licentiousness of men, they being already inclined enough to commit sin. We indeed see at this day that the doctrine of the Gospel does not restore all to obedience; but many give themselves a more unbridled license, as though the yoke of discipline was wholly removed. There was some fear under the Papacy, there was some sort of obedience and subjection; and now the liberty of the Gospel, what is it to many but brute license, so that they sin with impunity and blend heaven and earth together. There are also others who, on observing so many controversies, do, under that pretext, throw aside every concern for religion, and every attention to it. There are some fanatics who allow themselves to doubt and even to deny the existence of God. As then we see that the effect of the truth is not such as might be wished, those who are otherwise firm must needs be shaken or made to totter. Therefore, this passage ought the more to be noticed; for Jeremiah confesses that he was sore troubled when he saw that the word of God was a derision, and hence he wished to withdraw from the course of his calling. Let us know that whenever such a thing comes into our minds we ought manfully to resist it; and, therefore, the two things here mentioned ought to be connected, for when he said, *I will no more mention him, nor speak in his name*, he added, *but* the word of God was *like a burning fire.*

We hence see how God restrained his servant, lest he should fall headlong, or succumb under his temptation; for he would have been suddenly drawn in as it were into a deep gulf, had he not been preserved by God. Therefore, whenever temptations of this kind present themselves to us, let us pray God to restrain and to support us; or if we have already fallen, let us pray him to raise us up and to strengthen us by his Spirit.

But the way is shewn by which God aided his servant: The word of God became *as a burning fire in his heart;* and it was also *closed up in his bones*, so that he was led by an ardent zeal, and could not be himself without going onward in the course of his office. He concludes by saying,

that he *was wearied*, or could hardly bear himself, *with forbearing;* as though he had said, that it was not in his power either to abstain from teaching or to do what God commanded; for a burning ardour forced him to go on; and yet he had no doubt in his view those despisers with whom he had to do. It is the same then as though he had said, that he had found out what it was to have the whole world against him, but that God prevailed. Now this was said, because profane men take occasion to be secure and indifferent, when they imagine that Prophets and teachers are unfeeling men,—"O, what do we care for fanatics, who do not possess common feelings? and it is no wonder, since they are stupid and insensible, that they are thus angry and violent, disregard all others, and feel nothing that is human." As, then, they imagine that men are sticks, when they speak of God's servants as being without discretion, the Prophet seems to say, "Surely ye are deceived, for I am not so much an iron, but that I am influenced by strong and many feelings; nay, I have learnt and I know how great is my weakness, nor do I dissemble but that I am subject to fear, to sorrow, and to other passions; but God has *prevailed.* There is then no reason for you to think that I speak so boldly, because I feel nothing human; but I have done so after a hard struggle, after all those things came into my mind, which are calculated to weaken the courage of my heart; yet God stretched forth his hand to me, and not only so, but I was constrained, lest I should arrogate anything to myself, or boast of my heroic courage. *I did not prevail,* he says, but when I submitted myself to God and desired to give up my calling, I was constrained, and God dealt powerfully with me, for his word became as *a burning fire* in my heart, so that at length, through the strong influence of the Spirit, I was constrained to proceed in the discharge of my office."

Therefore I said, I will mention him no more, nor speak in his name; not that the Prophet wished himself or others to forget God, but because he thought that he lost all his labour, and that he in vain made a stir, since he cried aloud without any benefit, and not only so, but he more and more exasperated the wicked; as an ulcer, the more it is

pressed, the more putrid matter it emits; so the impiety of the people was more and more discovered, when the Prophet reproved sins which were before hid.[1]

Let us now then learn by the example of the Prophet, that whenever Satan or our flesh raises an objection and says, that we ought to desist from preaching celestial truth because it produces not its proper and legitimate fruits, it is nevertheless a good odour before God, though fatal to the ungodly. Though then the truth of the Gospel proves the savour of death to many, yet our labour is not on that account of no value before God; for we know that we offer to God an acceptable sacrifice; and though our labour be useless as to men, it is yet fruitful as to the glory of God; and while we are the odour of death unto death to those who perish, yet to God, even in this respect, our labour is acceptable. (2 Cor. ii. 16.)

Let us also beware lest we withdraw ourselves from God; but even when many things happen to impede our course, let us overcome them by the power of the Spirit. At the same time let us fear, lest through our sloth we bury our ardour of which the Prophet speaks. We see what happened to Jonah; he had so far fallen as to forsake entirely his office, by extinguishing, as much as he could, the judgment of God; and when he became a fugitive, he thought himself beyond danger, as though he was removed from God's presence. (Jonah i. 3.) God indeed saw him, but yet his word was not in him as a burning fire. As then so great a man

[1] The beginning of the eighth verse seems to be connected with the end of the seventh. Such appears to be the *Syriac* version. Then the remaining part of the eighth will coalesce with the ninth. This gives a consistency to the whole passage.

I am become a derision every day;
The whole of it are jeering me,
8. Whenever I speak, cry against violence,
Or, proclaim a devastation.
Because the word of Jehovah was to me
A reproach and a scoff every day,
9. Therefore I said, "I will not mention it,
Nor will I speak any more in his name;"
But it became in my heart
Like a burning fire, confined in my bones;
And I was wearied with restraining and I could not.—*Ed.*

through his own sloth extinguished, as far as he could, the light of the Holy Spirit, how much more ought we to fear, lest the same thing should happen to us? Let us then rouse the sparks of this fervour, until it inflame us, so that we may faithfully devote ourselves altogether to the service of God; and if at any time we become slothful, let us stimulate ourselves, and may the power of the Holy Spirit be so revived, that we may to the end pursue the course of our office and never stand still, but assail even the whole world, knowing that God commands us and requires from us what others disapprove and condemn.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as at this day a greater and viler impiety breaks forth than at any age, and thy sacred truth is treated with derision by many of Satan's drudges,—O grant, that we may nevertheless constantly persevere in it, nor hesitate to oppose the fury of all the ungodly, and relying on the power of thy Spirit, contend with them until that truth, which thou didst once proclaim by thy Prophets, and at length by thine only-begotten Son, and which was sealed by his blood, may attain its full authority, that as it proves to many the savour of eternal death, so it may also be a pledge to us of eternal salvation, until we shall be gathered into thy kingdom at the coming of the same thy Son Jesus Christ.—Amen.

Lecture Seventy-Seventh.

10. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

10. Quia audivi contumeliam multorum, terrorem undique, Nuntiate et nuntiabimus: omnis vir (*id est*, omnes homines, homo pacis, *ad verbum*, אנוש omnes homines) pacis meæ (*id est*, familiares mei, *qui debuerant colere mecum amicitiam*) observant latus meum (*vel*, claudicationem, *metaphorice et melius*,) si forte erret, et prævaleamus ei, et sumamus ultionem nostram ex eo.

JEREMIAH proceeds with the same subject, and before God accuses his enemies,—that they disgracefully contended with him, though he deserved no such treatment, for he had endeavoured to secure as far as he could their safety. He then

says, that he had *heard the slander of many*, or as it may be rendered, *of the great;* but the former rendering is more suitable, for it immediately follows, that there was *terror on every side*, as though all with one consent assailed him. He then says, that he was surrounded with terror on every side, because he saw that the whole mass was opposed and hostile to him, and that he stood alone. He says, also, that his enemies laid in wait for him, and sought occasions to destroy him.

Report ye, and we will report to him. Here he assumes their person and relates what they consulted to do. He, no doubt, introduces here the chief men and the priests as the speakers, who were contriving means to form an accusation against the holy man; for we know what is commonly done in conspiracies of this kind; worthless men run here and there and hunt for every little thing; then they bring their report, and from this the accusation is formed. As, then, it did not comport with the dignity of the chief men and of the priests, to run here and there and to inquire of such as they might meet with what Jeremiah had said, they sat still and sent others, and said, "Go and report to us, and we shall then report to the king." For the word "king" must be here understood, as the pronoun is put without an antecedent; come then and *report, and we will report to him.* We now perceive what Jeremiah complained of, even that he had not only many enemies who calumniated him, but that he had also those who wished insidiously to entrap him.

And he adds what was still worse,—that he was thus unjustly treated, not only by strangers or those who were openly his enemies, but by his own friends or relations; for the Hebrews called domestics and those connected by relationship, *men of peace;* "the man of my peace, in whom I trusted," is an expression used in Ps. xli. 9; but it is a phrase which often occurs. In short, Jeremiah means, that he was not only in a manner overwhelmed by a vast number of enemies, but that he was also without any friends, for they treacherously betrayed him. He says that they *watched his side*, or halting. Some render it "breaking;" but halting or debility is the most suitable; and the metaphor is

most appropriate: it is taken from the side, and they who halt or through weakness totter incline now on this side, then on that side. So Jeremiah says, that they watched him; *if by chance he go astray*. He again speaks in their name, "Let us then watch whether he will halt or go astray from the road: and then we shall prevail against him."

We may, in short, gather from these words, that this holy servant of God was not only harassed openly by professed enemies, but that he was also insidiously watched, and perfidiously, too, by men who pretended to be his friends, while yet they were his worst enemies. If, then, deceitful men at this time assail us by secret means, and others oppose us openly, let us know that nothing new has happened to us; for in these two ways God tried Jeremiah. We also see that it was a common thing with the ungodly to lay hold on some pretext for calumny: for as soon as the Prophets opened their mouth, they could have said nothing but what was immediately misrepresented; and hence Micah complained that he was assailed by a similar artifice, for when he spoke with severity, they all cried out that he raised a tumult among the people, and sought nothing but new things, so that by disturbing the state of the city and kingdom, he would bring all things to ruin. (Mic. ii. 6.) If, then, God suffers us to be tried by such intrigues, let us bear such indignity with resigned and calm minds; for no Prophet has been exempt from this kind of trouble and annoyance.

They said further, *Let us take our revenge on him*, as though, indeed, they had a cause for revenge! for what had Jeremiah done? In what had he offended them? Though, then, they had suffered no wrong, they yet would take revenge! But it is no wonder that the ungodly and the despisers of God spoke thus; for we know that they thought themselves grievously injured whenever their wounds were touched; for they considered reproofs, however just and necessary, to be reproaches. Hence then it was, that their rage kindled in them a desire for revenge, though yet no wrong had been done to them.[1] He afterwards adds,—

[1] There is not much agreement in the early versions on this verse, nor in the *Targum;* and modern expounders somewhat differ, though the

11. But the Lord *is* with me as a mighty terrible one; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: *their* everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

11. Atqui Jehova mecum tanquam gigas fortis, (*aut*, terribilis:) propterea persecutores mei ruent, et non prævalebunt; pudefient valde, quia non prudenter agunt, (*vel*, non prospere succedet illis;) opprobrium seculi (*id est*, perpetuum;.*subaudiendum est*, quod) non oblivioni tradetur.

Here the Prophet sets up God's aid against all the plottings formed against him. However, then, might perfidious friends on one hand try privately to entrap him, and open enemies might on the other hand publicly oppose him, he yet doubted not but that God would be a sufficient protection to him. And we ought to act exactly in the same manner, whenever Satan rouses the wicked against us to oppose us either by secret artifices or by open cruelty; God alone must be, as they say, our brazen wall. But we must first know that he stands on our side; for the power of God can avail nothing to animate us, except we be firmly persuaded of this truth, that he is on our side. And how this confidence can be obtained, we shall presently see.

He says, that his *persecutors* would fall, so that they would *not prevail*, but be *ashamed*. We see how many persecuted the holy man, and also with what arms they were furnished; for they possessed great power, and were also endued with guiles and intrigues. But the Prophet was satisfied with the help of God alone, and boldly concluded, that they would

general meaning is obvious, and is given very lucidly by *Calvin*. I shall give what I consider to be the most literal rendering,—

Truly I have heard the babbling of many,—
"TERROR ON EVERY SIDE, publish ye;
We also shall publish it:"
All the men *who are* at peace with me,
Watch for my halting,—
"He may perhaps be enticed;
Then we shall prevail over him,
And shall take on him our revenge."

Both *Grotius* and *Blayney* render כִּי, "truly," or verily, and consider this verse connected with the following. There is evidently in the second line an allusion to the name given to Pashur: the multitude, by the way of ridicule, repeated the name. *Cocceius* and *Blayney* render the line according to this meaning. "All the men," &c., literally, "Every man of my peace," that is, who is at peace with him; they were those who *seemed* to be his friends, though really his enemies, and plotting for his downfal, and that by trying to entice him out of his course.—*Ed.*

fall; for it could not be but that God would prove victorious. Whenever, then, we fight with the world and the devil and his slaves, this ought in the first place to come to our minds, that God stands on our side to defend our cause and to protect our safety. This being settled, we may then boldly defy both the artifices and the violence of all enemies; for it cannot be but that God will scatter, lay prostrate, overwhelm, and reduce to nothing all those who fight against him.

He further says that their *reproach* would be *perpetual*, and would never come to *oblivion*. We have seen already that the Prophet was loaded with many reproaches; but whenever God suffers his servants to be exposed to the curses of the wicked, he in due time aids them; and therefore we ought fully to expect that he will shortly dissipate, as mists, such calumnies. As then God, according to what is said in Psalm xxxvii. 6, brings forth the innocency of the godly like the dawn, which in a moment appears while the earth seems buried in darkness, so the Prophet now says that on the other hand the *reproach* with which God will cover all the wicked will be *perpetual*.[1] It now follows,—

12. But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, *and* seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

12. Et (*vel*, tu autem) Jehova exercituum, probans justum, videns renes et cor, videbo ultionem tuam ex ipsis, quia tibi patefeci litem meam (*vel*, jus meam, causam meam.)

The Prophet shews here briefly how he dared to allege God's name and help against his enemies; for hypocrites

[1] Except in the first line, the *Sept.* and the *Vulg.* differ from the text as well as from one another; both are exceedingly confused. Few expounders have kept the proper tenses of the verbs. The Prophet states not only what would happen to his enemies, but also what had already in part happened to them,—

11. But Jehovah is with me as a terrible warrior;
Therefore my persecutors shall stumble,
And shall not prevail:
They have become exceedingly ashamed,
Because they have not succeeded;
A perpetual shame!
It shall not be forgotten.

The last two lines are according to what *Horsley* suggests. "A terrible warrior" is rendered by the *Sept.*, "a strong combatant, μαχητὴς ἰσχύων;" by the *Vulg.*, "a brave warrior, *bellator fortis*;" by the *Syr.*, "the strongest giant;" and by the *Arab.*, "the strongest help."—*Ed.*

often boast that God is their helper, but they falsely pretend his name. The proof, then, by which the Prophet shews that he did not falsely or presumptuously pretend what he had stated,—that God was to him like a strong giant, who could easily lay prostrate all the wicked, ought to be well weighed; and it was this—that he dared to make God the witness and judge of his integrity. Hence if we desire to have God's name to plead for the purpose of repelling all those artifices which are contrived against us by the devil, we must learn to offer ourselves to be tried by him, so that he may really examine our thoughts and feelings.

Now, in the first place, let us bear in mind what the Prophet teaches,—that nothing is hid from God; for hypocrites will not hesitate to go so far as to offer themselves to be tried by God; but they do not yet duly consider what is said here, that nothing is hid from him. There are many recesses in the heart of man, and we know that all things there have many wrappings and coverings; but God in the meantime is a heart-discerner, (καρδιογνώστης,) who proves the heart and reins. Under the word *reins*, the Hebrews include all the hidden thoughts and feelings. We must then remember this as the first thing, that the Prophet acknowledges that there can be no disguise as to God, and that men gain nothing by acting fallaciously, for he penetrates into the inmost thoughts and discerns between the thoughts and the feelings.

He adds that the *righteous are tried* by God. There is to be understood here a contrast, because men's judgment is commonly superficial; for when there is an appearance of integrity, there is an immediate acquittal, though the heart may be deceitful and full of all perfidy. The Prophet then means, that when we come to God's tribunal no one is there acquitted but he who brings a pure heart and real integrity. He then rises to a higher confidence, and says, that he should *see the vengeance* of God.

We now see whence the Prophet derived his confidence, even because he had thoroughly examined himself, and that before God; he had not appealed to earthly witnesses only, nor had he, as it were, ascended a public theatre to solicit

the favour of the people; but he knew that he was approved by God, because he was sincere and honest.

And then he justly adds, at the same time, that he had *made known his cause* or his complaint to God. There is to be understood here again a contrast; for they who are carried away by the popular breath do not acquiesce in God's judgment. Ambition, like a violent wind, always carries men along so that they cannot stop themselves; hence it is that neither the testimony of conscience nor the judgment of God has much weight with them. But the Prophet says, that he had made known his cause to God.

If any one objects and says, that hypocrites do the same, to this I answer, that though some imitation may appear in them, there is nothing real or genuine; for though they may boast that God is their witness, and that he approves of their cause, it is only what they speak vainly before men; for there is not one of them who deals thus privately with God. As long, then, as they are given to ostentation, they do not make known their cause to God, however they may appeal to him, refer to his tribunal, and declare that they have no other end in view but to promote his glory. They, then, who boastingly sound forth these things before the world for their own advantage, do not yet make known their cause to God, but by frivolous and vain boasting pretend his name.

What, then, is it to make known our cause to God? It is to do this when no one is witness, and when God alone appears before us. When we dare in our prayers to address God thus,—"O Lord, thou knowest my integrity, thou knowest that there is nothing hid which I do now lay before thee," then it is that we truly make known our cause to God; for in this case there is no regard had for men, but we are satisfied with the judgment of God alone. This was the case with the Prophet when he said, that he had made known his cause to God; and it must have been so, for we have seen that all ranks of men were opposed to him. As then he was under the necessity of fleeing to the only true God, he justly says, that he had referred his cause to him.

By saying that he should see the *vengeance* of God, he

alludes to that wished-for revenge before mentioned, for his enemies had said, "Let us take our revenge on him." The Prophet says, "*I shall see thy vengeance*, O Lord." By saying that he should *see* it, he speaks as though he had his hands tied; for thus the faithful, of their own accord, restrain themselves, because they know that they are forbidden by God's command to revenge themselves on their enemies. As, then, there is a difference between doing and seeing, the Prophet here makes a distinction between himself and the audaciously wicked; for he would not himself take vengeance according to the violence of his wrath, but that he should only *see* it; and then he calls it the vengeance of God, for men rob God of his right whenever they revenge themselves according to their own will. Paul says, "Give place to wrath." (Rom. xii. 19.) While exhorting the faithful to forbearance, he uses this reason, that otherwise no place is given to God's judgment; for whenever we take revenge, we anticipate God, as though every one of us ascended God's tribunal, and arrogated to ourselves his office. We now, then, perceive what this mode of speaking means.[1]

But we must at the same time notice, that God's vengeance is not to be imprecated, except on the reprobate and irreclaimable. For the Prophet no doubt pitied his enemies, and wished, if they were reclaimable, that God would be propitious and merciful to them, according to what we have before seen. What, then, the revenge intimates of which he speaks is, that he knew by the prophetic spirit that they were wholly irreclaimable; and as his mind was under the

[1] There is but little difference between this verse and the 20th of the 11th chapter; the variety is in the first two lines. While here we have—

But Jehovah of hosts, *who art* the trier of the righteous,
The seer of the reins and of the heart;

we have as follows in chap. xi. 20,—

But Jehovah of hosts, *who art* a righteous judge,
The trier of the reins and of the heart.

As in the former instance, the Versions render what follows as an imprecation,—"May I see," &c., while the *Targum* does as *Calvin*, "I shall see," &c.; and this better comports with the passage. The Prophet first mentions God as a righteous judge, and then he concludes that he should see God's vengeance on his enemies, because he had devolved his cause on him, or revealed it to him. He had referred his cause to a righteous judge, and hence he felt assured that vengeance would overtake his enemies.—*Ed.*

influence of right zeal, he could imprecate on them the vengeance of God. If any one now, after the example of the Prophet, should wish all his enemies destroyed, and would have God armed against them, he would act very presumptuously, for it does not belong to us to determine before the time who the reprobate and the irreclaimable are; until this be found out by us, we ought to pray for all without exception, and every one ought also to consider by what zeal he is influenced, lest we should be under the power of turbulent feelings, as is commonly the case, and lest also our zeal be hasty and inconsiderate. In short, except it be certain to us that our zeal is guided by the spirit of uprightness and wisdom, we should never pray for vengeance on our enemies. He afterwards adds,—

13. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord; for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil-doers.	13. Canite Jehovæ, celebrate Jehovam, quia eripuit animam miseri (*vel*, afflicti) e manu sceleratorum.

Here the Prophet breaks out into an open expression of joy, and not only gives thanks himself to God, that he had been freed from the intrigues and violence of the wicked, but he also summons others, and encourages them to sing praises to God; as though he had said, that his deliverance was such a favour, that not only he should be thankful to God for it, but that all should join to celebrate it, according to what is said by Paul in 2 Cor. i. 11, that thanks might be given by many to God. The Prophet no doubt had experienced God's help, yea, that help which he had before so highly extolled. As, then, he had really found that God was victorious, and that his safety had been defended against all the ungodly by God's invincible power, he in full confidence expressed his thanks, and wished all God's servants to join with him.[1]

Whenever, then, we are reduced into straits, and seem to

[1] The "poor" here does not mean him who is in low circumstances, but him who is helpless or defenceless; and this is the meaning of the word often in other parts, especially in the Psalms. The word "soul," too, here and in other places, means life,—

Sing ye to Jehovah, praise Jehovah,
For he hath rescued the life of the helpless
From the hand of malignants.—*Ed.*

be, as it were, rejected by God himself, let us still wait patiently until he may be pleased to free us from the hand of the wicked; without misery and distress preceding, we should never sufficiently acknowledge the power of God in preserving us. Thus Jeremiah confesses that he was for a time miserable and oppressed, but that he was at length delivered, even when the ungodly and wicked thought themselves victorious. Now follows an outcry, which seems to be of a very different character,—

14. Cursed *be* the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.

15. Cursed *be* the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad.

16. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noon-tide.

14. Maledictus dies, quo natus sum (in eo, *sed abundat;*) dies quo peperit me mater mea, non sit benedictus:

15. Maledictus vir, qui nuntiavit patri meo, dicendo, Natus est tibi filius masculus; quoniam (*vel*, quando) lætificavit eum (*hoc est*, cum vellet exhilarare patrem meum.)

16. Et sit vir ille quasi urbes quas perdidit Jehova, et non pœnituit, et audiat clamorem mane, et tumultum tempore meridiano, (*hoc est*, in meridie ipsa.)

It seems, as I have said, that the Prophet was inconsistent with himself; from joy and thanksgiving he immediately passed into curses and execrations; what could have been less appropriate? If we say that he was tried by a new temptation, yet this seems by no means satisfactory, though it is in this way that interpreters commonly untie the knot. But it seems to me a levity unworthy of the holy man to pass suddenly from thanksgiving to God into imprecations, as though he had forgotten himself. I, therefore, doubt not but that the Prophet here relates how grievously he had been harassed by his own thoughts. The whole of this passage, then, is connected with thanksgiving, for he amplifies the deliverance which he has just mentioned, that is, that he had been brought back, as it were, from the lower regions. Thus he recites, in the latter passage, what had before happened to him, as though he had said, "When I now declare that I have been rescued by God from the hand of the wicked, I cannot sufficiently express the greatness of that favour, until I make it more clearly known to

all the godly how great and how dreadful agonies I suffered, so that I cursed my birth-day, and abhorred everything that ought to have stimulated me to give praise to God."

In short, the Prophet teaches us here that he was not only opposed by enemies, but also distressed inwardly in his mind, so that he was carried away contrary to reason and judgment, by turbulent emotions which even led him to give utterance to vile blasphemies. For what is here said cannot be extenuated; but the Prophet most grievously sinned when he became thus calumnious towards God; for a man must be in a state of despair when he curses the day in which he was born. Men are, indeed, wont to celebrate their birth-day; and it was a custom which formerly prevailed, to acknowledge yearly that they owed it to God's invaluable goodness that they were brought forth into vital light. As then it is a reason for thanksgiving, it is evident that when we turn to a curse what ought to rouse us to praise God, we are no longer in a right mind, nor possessed of reason, but that we are seized as it were with a sacrilegious madness; and yet into this state had the Prophet fallen.[1]

[1] The greatest difficulty in this passage is the connection. That Jeremiah should have cursed his birth-day is what can be accounted for, as in the case of Job. Nature, even in the best of men, sometimes utters its own voice. But how he came to do this immediately after having thanked God for his deliverance, seems singular. The explanation of *Calvin*, that he relates what had passed in his mind, while he was confined by Pashur, is plausible, and has been adopted by *Grotius*, *Gataker*, *Cocceius*, and *Henry*. *Grotius* considered, "I had said," to be understood at the beginning of the fourteenth verse. *Adam Clarke* thought that the words have been transposed, and that the five last verses ought to come in between the eighth and the ninth verse: and he says what is true, that there are many transpositions in this book. *Houbigant*, approved by *Horsley*, thought the right place for these verses is between the sixth and the seventh verse. But these transpositions are not satisfactory. *Venema's* notion is, that Jeremiah does not speak in his own name, but in the name of Pashur. Having described in the previous verse his own case, the protection he found from God, he describes in these verses the wretchedness and misery of his persecutor, and introduces him as cursing his birth-day, &c. But this is very far-fetched and fanciful. *Scott* acknowledges the transition to be very extraordinary, but yet thinks that the Prophet describes what had passed through his own mind, and says that the experience of good men proves that such sudden changes occur. "An experimental acquaintance with our hearts," he says, "and the variations of our passions, under sharp trials, as encouraging or discouraging thoughts occur to our minds, will best enable us to understand it." This is probably the right view of the subject. The Prophet, indeed, acknowledged God's kindness in saving

We may then here learn with what care ought every one of us to watch himself, lest we be carried away by a violent feeling, so as to become intemperate and unruly.

At the same time I allow, and it is what we ought carefully to notice, that the origin of his zeal was right. For though the Prophet indirectly blamed God, we ought yet to consider the source of his complaint; he did not curse his birth-day because he was afflicted with diseases, or because he could not endure poverty and want, or because he suffered some private evils; no, nothing of this kind was the case with the Prophet; but the reason was, because he saw that all his labour was lost, which he spent for the purpose of securing the wellbeing of the people; and further, because he found the truth of God loaded with calumnies and reproaches. When, therefore, he saw the ungodly thus insolently resisting him, and that all religion was treated with ridicule, he felt deeply moved. Hence it was that the holy man was touched with so much anguish. And we hence clearly see, that the source of his zeal was right.

But we are here reminded how much vigilance we ought to exercise over ourselves; for in most instances, when we become weary of life, and desire death, and hate the world, with the light and all the blessings of God, how is it that we are thus influenced, except that disdain reigns within us, or that we cannot with resignation bear reproaches, or that poverty is too grievous to us, or that some troubles press on us too heavily? It is not that we are influenced by a zeal for God. Since, then, the Prophet, who had no regard to himself nor had any private reason either of gain or of loss, became yet thus exasperated and so very vehement, nay, seized with so violent a feeling, we ought surely to exercise the more care to restrain our feelings; and though many things may daily happen to us, which may produce weariness, or overwhelm us with so much disdain as to render all things hateful to us, we ought yet to contend against such feelings; and if we cannot, at the first effort, repress and

his life, and invited others to join him in praising him: yet when he considered his circumstances, he gave way to his own natural feelings.—*Ed.*

subdue them, we ought, at least, according to the example of the Prophet, to learn to correct them by degrees, until God cheers and comforts us, so that we may rejoice and sing a song of thanksgiving.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as virulent tongues now surround us, and the devil has many mercenaries, who have nothing else in view but to prevent by clamours whatever is rightly derived from thee, and has proceeded from thy mouth,—O grant, that we may firmly oppose such intrigues, and also stand with resolute minds against all their violent artifices, and proceed in the course of thy holy calling, until we shall at length surely know that they who trust in thee, and faithfully devote themselves to thy service, are never left without thy help; and that, having at last finished our warfare, we may be gathered into that blessed rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Seventy-Eight.

We said yesterday that the Prophet's confused state of mind is described in this passage; for he would have no doubt himself confessed, that he was carried away by an intemperate feeling, so as not to be himself; for it is to cast reproach on God when any one curses his own birth-day. And he goes farther than this, for he adds, *Cursed be the man who declared to my father, that a male child was born.* Here he not only fights against God, but is also ungrateful towards men; for what but thanks did he deserve who first told his father that he had a son born to him? It was then an ingratitude in no way excusable. And hence we also learn that the Prophet had no control over his feelings, but was wholly led away by a blind impulse, which made him to utter very inconsiderate words; for in this sentence there is no piety nor humanity; but as I have said, the Prophet was ungrateful to men as well as to God; and his hyperbolical language also more fully expresses how intemperate his feelings were, *who declared to my father that a male child was*

born. He seems here, as though he avowedly despised God's favour, for we know that males are preferred to females. But the Prophet mentions here the word male, as though he wished to complain of what he ought to have been thankful for.

And he adds, *Who with joy made him joyful.* We see, as it is commonly said, how he mingles heaven and earth; for had it been in his power, when this frenzy possessed his mind, he would have certainly disturbed all the elements. But more grievous and more inordinate is what follows, *Let that man be like the cities which God destroyed without repentance.* Why did he imprecate on an innocent man the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? and then he speaks not of temporal punishment, but devotes the man to endless perdition, for that is the import of the words, *and he repented not;* as though he had said, "May God be angry with him, without shewing any mercy, but manifest himself as wholly implacable, as he dealt with Sodom, which he at once destroyed without leaving it any hope." Had he spoken of an inveterate enemy, he ought to have kept within those bounds prescribed to all God's children; but he had nothing against the man who brought the news to his father. We hence see how he was led away as it were by an insane impulse.

But let us hence learn to restrain, in due time, our feelings, which will pass over all bounds if we indulge them; for they will break out then as it were into fury, as the case was with the Prophet.

He also adds, *Let him hear a cry in the morning, and a tumult at noon-tide.* Here he devotes an innocent man to perpetual inquietude. And mention is made of the dawn, for we know that terrors occur during darkness in the night. If anything happens in the day-time, we inquire what it is, and we are not so frightened; but when there is any noise in the night, fear takes full possession of us. There is then something monstrous in what the Prophet expresses here. Hence, also, we more fully learn how very hot was his indignation, that he thus wished perpetual torments to an innocent man. *In the morning,* he says, *let him hear a cry, and*

at noon a tumult. Had he said, "Let him hear a cry perpetually," it would not have been so grievous. It now follows,—

17. Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb *to be* always great *with me.*

17. Quare non occidisti me ab utero? et fuisset (*hoc est*, ut esset) mihi mater mea sepulchrum meum? et in utero ejus conceptus sæculi (*id est*, perpetuus, *vel*, uterus ejus fuisset in conceptu perpetuo; *et hæc posterior expositio videtur melius quadrare, ac si diceret, Fuisset uterus matris meæ sterilis, ita ut non conciperet nisi post sæculum, id est, nunquam.*)

18. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

18. Quare ex utero egressus sum ad videndum molestiam et dolorem, ut consumantur in opprobrio dies mei?

After having denounced his imprecations on his birth-day, and on the messenger who had wished to convey joy to his father, Jeremiah now expostulates with God. It hence appears how great was his madness; for thus must we speak. But if Jeremiah spared not God, how should he spare a mortal man? There is then no doubt but that he raged furiously against God, for his expostulation is that of a man wholly desperate; he asks, why he was not slain from the womb, as though he did not regard it as a kindness that he came alive into light. But this life, though exposed to many sorrows, ought yet to be counted as an evidence of God's inestimable favour. As the Prophet, then, not only despised this goodness of God, but contended with God himself, because he had been created a man and brought into light, how great was his ingratitude!

He then adds, *My mother might have been my grave;*[1]

[1] Our version seems right in rendering the ו in this sentence *or;* and so it ought to be rendered in the previous verse, otherwise there is an inconsistency in representing a man destroyed, and hearing an outcry, &c. The two verses may be thus rendered,—

16. And let that man be like the cities
Which Jehovah overturned and repented not;
Or a hearer of an outcry in the morning
And of tumult at noon-tide.
17. Why not slay me did he from the womb?
Or become to me did my mother my grave,
And her womb a perpetual conception?

The last words are, literally, "a conception of perpetuity,"—the *Vulg.*

that is, "This light and life I value not; why then did I not die in my mother's womb? and why did she conceive me?" Then he says, *Why came I forth from the womb that I might see trouble and sorrow, and that my days might be consumed in reproach?* Here he gives a reason why he was wearied of life; but he could not have been cleared on this account, nor ought he to be so at this day; for what just cause can we have to contend with God? Jeremiah was created to sorrow and trouble: this is the condition of all; why, then, should God be blamed? His days were spent in reproach: there was nothing new in his case; for many who have received an honourable testimony from God had suffered many wrongs and reproaches. Why, then, did he not look to them as examples, that he might bear with patience and resignation what had happened to other holy men? but he seemed as though he wished to appear as it were in public, that he might proclaim his disgrace, not only to his own age, but to every age to the end of the world.

At the same time we must remember the object he had in view; for the Prophet, as we have said, was not seized with this intemperate spirit after he had given thanks to God, and exulted as a conqueror, but before; and in order to amplify the grace of God in delivering him as it were from hell itself, into which he had plunged himself, he mentioned what had passed through his mind. The drift of the whole description seems to be this,—"I was lost, and my mind could conceive nothing but what was bitter, and with a full mouth I vomited forth poison and blasphemies against God." What the Prophet then had here in view, was to render more conspicuous the kindness of God in bringing him to light from so deep an abyss.

A similar mode of speaking is found in the third chapter of Job. But Job had not the reason which, as we have said, Jeremiah had; for Jeremiah was not influenced by any

has, "an eternal conception,"—the *Syr.*, "a perpetual conception." Then the next verse is as follows,—

18. For what purpose *has* this *been*?
From the womb I came forth,
To see labour and sorrow,
And spent in shame are my days.—*Ed.*

private grief when carried away by an insane impulse to speak against God. Whence, then, was his great grief? even because he saw he was despised by the people, and that the whole of religion was esteemed by them as nothing: in short, he saw that the state of things was quite hopeless. He was, then, inflamed with zeal for God's glory; and he also was extremely grieved at the irreclaimable wickedness of the people; but Job had only a respect to his own sufferings. There was, therefore, a great difference between Job and Jeremiah; and yet we know that both were endowed, as it were, with angelic virtue, for Job is named as one of three just men, who seemed to have been elevated above all mankind; and Jeremiah, if a comparison be made, was in this instance more excusable than Job; and yet we see that they were both inflamed with so unreasonable a grief, that they spared neither God nor man.

Let us then learn to check our feelings, that they may not break out thus unreasonably. Let us at the same time know that God's servants, though they may excel in firmness, are yet not wholly divested of their corruptions. And should it happen at any time to us to feel such emotions within us, let not such a temptation discourage us; but as far as we can and as God gives us grace, let us strive to resist it, until the firmness of our faith at length gains the ascendency, as we see was the case with Jeremiah. For when overwhelmed with such a confusion of mind as to lie down as it were dead in hell itself, he was yet restored, as we have seen, to such a soundness of mind, that he afterwards courageously executed his own office, and also gloried, according to what we observed yesterday, in the help of God. Let us proceed,—

CHAPTER XXI.

1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

1. Sermo qui datus fuit Jeremiæ (factus fuit ad Jeremiam) a Jehova, cum misisset ad eum rex Zedekias Phassur filium Malchiah et Zephaniam filium Maassiah sacerdotem (*vel*, sacerdotis) dicendo,

turn them against you." But the meaning seems more suitable to the etymology of the word, when we say, that the weapons which the Jews had would avail them nothing, because God would prevent them from producing any effect.[1]

He afterwards adds, *the Chaldeans, who fight without the wall against you.* He described their state at that time, for the city was besieged by the Chaldeans; there was a wall between them, and the Jews thought that they could repel the attacks of their enemies. But God says, "the Chaldeans are this day shut out by the wall, *but I will gather them*, he says, *into the middle of this city;* that is, I will make a breach, so that the wall may not be a hinderance to prevent the Chaldeans from occupying the very bosom of the city." It follows,—

5. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand, and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

5. Et præliabor ego contra vos in manu extenta et brachio robusto, et in ira et furore et excandescentia magna.

He proceeds with the subject; and though he afterwards is more diffuse, he yet confirms here what we have just seen, —even that God was the leader of the war, and that the Chaldeans were, as it were, his hired soldiers, whom he guided by his own hand, and to whom he would give the signal to fight.

I, myself, he says, *will fight against you.* He put this in opposition to the wonderful works which Zedekiah had mentioned. God, indeed, had formerly been in a wonderful way present with his Church, not only once, but a thousand times; but he says now, "whatever power I have, it shall be exercised now against you; expect, therefore, no aid from me, but know that I am armed, and shall wholly destroy you." He adds, *with an extended hand and a strong arm;* as though he had said, "your fathers found wonderful works done for their safety; but you shall by experience learn how great is my power to destroy you." In short, he means that

[1] The verb סב means to turn, to turn aside, to turn round, to change; it seems to mean here to turn to a contrary purpose, to turn from the right use, to divert, to revert, or to reverse, "Behold, I will reverse the instruments of war which are in your hands;" "μετάστρεψω—I change," that is, to what is opposite, is the *Sept.; Blayney* reads, "Behold, I will turn aside," &c.—*Ed.*

CHAPTER XXI

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2. Enquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us, (for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us,) if so be that the Lord will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

3. Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah;

4. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and *against* the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.

2. Interroga (inquire) nunc pro nobis (*aut*, consule pro nobis) Jehovam; quia Nebuchadnezer rex Babylonis præliatur contra nos, si faciat Jehova nobiscum secundum omnia mirabilia sua, et ascendat a nobis.

3. Et dixit Jeremias illis, Sic dicetis Zedekiæ,

4. Sic dicit Jehovah Deus Israel, Ecce ego reduco (*alii vertunt*, convertam; *quidam minus apte*, congregabo; *bene vertetur*, contraham, *vel*, prohibebo) omnia vasa (*id est*, instrumenta) bellica (belli) quæ sunt in manibus vestris, quibus vos præliamini (in ipsis, *sed abundat*) adversus regem Babylonis et Chaldæos, qui obsident vos ab extra murum (*hoc est*, foris extra murum,) et colligam ipsos in medium urbis hujus.

Jeremiah relates how he received the king's messengers, who sought from him an answer, whether he could bring any comfort in a state of things so perplexed and almost hopeless. He then says, that two had been sent to him; one was Pashur, not the priest mentioned in the last chapter, for he was the son of Immer, but this was the son of Melchiah; and the other was Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah. But he shews that the king and his counsellors were disappointed of their hope, for they expected a favourable answer, as though God would be propitious to Jerusalem; but the Prophet answered as he was commanded by God, that it was all over with the city, the kingdom, and the whole nation.

We shall also see from other passages that Zedekiah was not one of the worst; though he did not really fear God and was led away by false counsels, there was yet in him some regard for religion, so that he did not avowedly despise God as Epicureans do. Many such are found even at this day in the world, who think it enough to cherish a half-buried fear of God, and to retain some little regard for religion; but it is very fading, and disappears on even the least occasion. So it was with Zedekiah; he was as it were neutral, for he neither seriously worshipped God nor yet despised him.

Hence it was, that he sent messengers to Jeremiah. He knew that while God was displeased with them no safety could be hoped for; but he did not understand the way of appeasing God, nor had he any real desire to be reconciled to him; as the case is with hypocrites, who, though they wish God to be kind to them, yet when God's mercy is offered to them, either openly reject it, or are unwilling to embrace it, because they cannot bear to surrender themselves to God. Such was the state of mind in which Zedekiah was; and hence it was, that he asked the Prophet to consult God. But we must also observe that this was an honourable message; and it hence more fully appears that Zedekiah was not one of those furious tyrants, who like the giants seek to fight with God. For by sending two messengers to the Prophet, and employing him as an advocate to seek some favour from God, he proved that religion was not wholly suppressed and extinguished in him.

And hence also it may be seen how bold and courageous was the Prophet; for he was not softened by the honour paid to him, but gave such answer as was calculated to exasperate the king, and to drive him into great rage. But we ought especially to notice, that they did not flatter the Prophet so as to induce him to give a false answer, but wished God to be consulted. It hence appears that they were convinced of Jeremiah's integrity, that he would say nothing rashly or from himself, but would be a faithful interpreter and herald of heavenly oracles. And yet we see, and shall hereafter see in several passages, that the king was very incensed against God's Prophet. But hypocrites, though they are forced to reverence God, are yet carried here and there, and maintain no consistency, especially when they perceive that God is against them; for they are not turned by threatenings. They cannot, therefore, but make a tumult, and strive like refractory horses to shake off their rider. Such an instance we find in Zedekiah; for he acknowledged Jeremiah as God's faithful servant; for he did not say, "Tell a lie for us, or in our favour," but, *inquire of God for us.*

He then adds, *If Jehovah will deal with us according to*

all his wondrous works.[1] We again see that Zedekiah had some sense of religion; but it was very evanescent; for he was not influenced by any real impression, being like hypocrites who wish, as it has been said, to have peace with God, provided it be on their own terms. But as they are unwilling wholly to surrender themselves to God, they take a circuitous course, and seek to allure God to themselves, at least they come not to him except through various windings, and not in a direct way. Hence Zedekiah refers here to God's miraculous works which had been wrought in behalf of the Israelites in all ages: as though he had said, "God has hitherto dealt in a wonderful manner with his chosen people, and whenever he brought help to our fathers, he manifested wonderful proofs of his power: will he not deal with us at this day in the same manner?" He assumes the principle, that God's covenant remained inviolable: and this was quite true, but the application was false: for Zedekiah and the whole people ought to have kept faith with God. For if they wished God to be propitious to them, why did they not in return worship and serve him as their God? But as they were covenant-breakers, how foolishly and vainly did they allege God's covenant, which they themselves had rendered void! But it is usual with hypocrites to apply to themselves every favour which God shews to his own children: for they falsely assume the name as a covering, and say, that they are members of the Church because God had adopted them. This was the reason why Zedekiah asked whether God would do according to his wonderful works, as though he had said, "Surely God is ever like himself and we are his people: and as he has so often delivered his Church, and in such various ways, his power has always been wonderfully displayed: why, then, will he not deal with us in the same manner?"

He at last adds [illegible] that is, that

[illegible]: it is so rendered [illegible] more consistent [illegible] with the exception [illegible] the first verb in the [illegible] Then the [illegible]

the King Nebuchadnezzar may raise the siege and leave us free.

Now follows the answer of Jeremiah, *say ye to Zedekiah*, &c.; he did not go to the king himself, but by way of contempt delivered the message to be borne by the messengers. The Prophet no doubt did this designedly, and through the impulse of the Holy Spirit. He did not, indeed, proudly despise his king; but it was necessary for him by his magnanimity to cast down the pride of the king, so that he might know that he had to do with the living God, whom he had very insolently treated. *Say ye to Zedekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel*, &c. He adds the words, *the God of Israel*, that Zedekiah might know that the wonderful works, in reliance on which he still thought that their condition was safe, did not belong to him and the people; as though the Prophet had said, "Though God did not help thee and thy people, he would not yet be inconsistent with himself, or depart from his covenant; but he would remain ever the God of Israel, though he destroyed thee and all thy people."

He says, *Behold I*, &c.; it was said before, Nebuchadnezzar is come to make war with us: now he says, "I am God;" as though he had said, "Nebuchadnezzar may be conquered, he may change his counsel, he may leave you through weariness; but know ye that Nebuchadnezzar fights under my authority." *Behold*, he says, I prohibit (for so ought מסב to be rendered) *all the warlike instruments which are in your hands, and with which ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans;* as though he had said, "However furnished ye may be with weapons and forces, and whatever may be necessary to defend the city, I forbid the use of these weapons, that is, I will cause that they will avail you nothing." Some, as I have said, render the word, "I will

2. Pray now for us to Jehovah; for Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, is warring against us: it may be that Jehovah will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, and make *him* to depart from us.

The verb דרש, transitively as here, means to seek: see Ps. xxxiv. 5. And to seek the favour of Jehovah, or to pray to him, seems most consistent with the latter part of the verse. *Blayney's* rendering is, "Intreat, we pray thee, Jehovah for us;" and this is the meaning taken by *Venema* and *Gataker*.—*Ed.*

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He afterwards adds, *the Chaldeans, who fight without the wall against you.* He described their state at that time, for the city was besieged by the Chaldeans; there was a wall between them, and the Jews thought that they could repel the attacks of their enemies. But God says, "the Chaldeans are this day shut out by the wall, *but I will gather them,* he says, *into the middle of this city;* that is, I will make a breach, so that the wall may not be a hinderance to prevent the Chaldeans from occupying the very bosom of the city." It follows,—

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of all these calamities; *I will smite*, he says, *the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; by a great pestilence shall they die.* This was the first kind of punishment; before the enemy rushed into the city the pestilence had consumed many of the people. Now there is a circumstance mentioned which shews how dreadful would be their state, for not only men would perish, but even brute animals. It was no wonder that God's vengeance extended to horses, and oxen, and asses; for we know that all these were created for the use of man. Hence when God manifested his wrath as to these animals, his object was to fill men with greater terrors; for they thus saw oxen and asses, though innocent, involved in the same punishment with themselves. For how can we suppose that horses and asses deserved to perish by diseases, or through want of daily food? But God sets forth such a spectacle as this, that he may more effectually touch men; for they thus see that the whole world is exposed to a curse through their sins. They are indeed constrained to know how great their sinfulness is; for on this account it is that the earth becomes dry and barren, that the elements above and below perform not their offices, so that the sterility of the ground deprives animals of their food, and the infection of the air kills them. But on this subject we have spoken elsewhere.

He then adds, *And afterwards*, that is, when the pestilence had in a great measure consumed them; *I will give*, or deliver, he says, *Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his servants, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.* He intimates that though they might suffer with courage their wants, it would be of no avail to them. It often happens that a siege is raised, when the obstinacy of the besieged is so great, that they overcome famine and thirst, and struggle against extreme want; for they who besiege them are led to think that they contend with furious wild beasts, and so depart from them. But God declares here that the event would be different as to the Jews, for after having been nearly consumed, they would still be delivered up into the power of their enemies. Thus he shews that their endurance would be useless. It is indeed a most deplorable thing, that when

PRAYER.

[illegible] that as we cease not to provoke thy [illegible] repent.—O grant, that we may at [illegible] threatenings and the manifestations of t[illegible] [illegible] give up ourselves wholly to thee, [illegible] which has been for a time hidden [illegible] minds we shall be able confidently [illegible] prove our constancy, that thy name may [illegible] that we may also be glorified in thee th[illegible] [illegible] Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Seventy-Ninth.

[illegible] And I will smite the inhabi[illegible] [illegible] man and [illegible] they shall die of a great pes[illegible]

[illegible] And afterward, saith the Lord, [illegible] Zedekiah king of Ju[illegible] and his servants, and the people, [illegible] left in this city from [illegible] from the sword, and [illegible] the famine, into the hand of [illegible] king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, [illegible] the hand of those that seek [illegible] and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall [illegible] them, neither have pity, [illegible] have mercy.

6. Et percutiam [illegible] hujus, tam homin[illegible] peste magna mori[illegible]

7. Et post si[illegible] hova. Tradam Z[illegible] hudah, et servo[illegible] et qui residui [illegible] peste, a gladio [illegible] um Nebucha[illegible] et in manum [illegible] et in manu[illegible] ipsorum; et [illegible] non parcet [illegible] que misera[illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] that [illegible] king of [illegible]

[illegible]pulative is [illegible] *enesha-* [illegible] but the [illegible] even a small [illegible] rendered, [illegible] Jerusalem, [illegible] rishing state, [illegible] erefore shews, [illegible] ple to a small [illegible] their evils, but [illegible], for their life [illegible]; he therefore [illegible]; and he alludes [illegible] any would perish [illegible] famine, but also to [illegible] even those who [illegible] *the sword, and* [illegible] *sual*, produced pes-

JEREMIAH goes on with the same dis[illegible] had resolved to destroy Jerusalem and [illegible] for a time. But he points out here w[illegible] even that he would consume them by [illegible] as long as they continued in the [illegible] Though these Chaldeans ma[illegible] [illegible] by means of a siege, yet [illegible] for famine shall rage within [illegible] the design of the Pr[illegible] must keep in mind wh[illegible] [illegible] God assumes to him [illegible] Chaldeans, for he [illegible]

of all these calamities; *I will smite*, he says, *the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; by a great pestilence shall they die.* This was the first kind of punishment; before the enemy rushed into the city the pestilence had consumed many of the people. Now there is a circumstance mentioned which shews how dreadful would be their state, for not only men would perish, but even brute animals. It was no wonder that God's vengeance extended to horses, and oxen, and asses; for we know that all these were created for the use of man. Hence when God manifested his wrath as to these animals, his object was to fill men with greater terrors; for they thus saw oxen and asses, though innocent, involved in the same punishment with themselves. For how can we suppose that horses and asses deserved to perish by diseases, or through want of daily food? But God sets forth such a spectacle as this, that he may more effectually touch men; for they thus see that the whole world is exposed to a curse through their sins. They are indeed constrained to know how great their sinfulness is; for on this account it is that the earth becomes dry and barren, that the elements above and below perform not their offices, so that the sterility of the ground deprives animals of their food, and the infection of the air kills them. But on this subject we have spoken elsewhere.

He then adds, *And afterwards*, that is, when the pestilence had in a great measure consumed them; *I will give*, or deliver, he says, *Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his servants, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.* He intimates that though they might suffer with courage their wants, it would be of no avail to them. It often happens that a siege is raised, when the obstinacy of the besieged is so great, that they overcome famine and thirst, and struggle against extreme want; for they who besiege them are led to think that they contend with furious wild beasts, and so depart from them. But God declares here that the event would be different as to the Jews, for after having been nearly consumed, they would still be delivered up into the power of their enemies. Thus he shews that their endurance would be useless. It is indeed a most deplorable thing, that when

Since then they had so often rejected the mercy of God, they had in a manner closed up the door of pardon. Hence it was that God resolved that the Chaldeans should thus rage against them without any feeling of humanity. It afterwards follows,—

8. And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

9. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

8. Et ad populum hunc dices, sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego propono coram vobis (coram faciebus vestris) viam vitæ (vitarum, *ad verbum,*) et viam mortis:

9. Qui habitabit in urbe hac morietur gladio et fame et peste; qui autem egressus fuerit et habitaverit (*vertunt quidam,* qui ceciderit; *sed dicemus de hoc verbo postea*) apud Chaldeos, qui obsident vos, vivet et anima illi erit in spolium.

God here declares that he *proposed* to the people *the way of life and the way of death,* in order that they might surely know that all who remained in the city would soon meet with death, and that those who willingly surrendered to their enemies would have their life spared. Moses says in another sense that he set before them the way of life and the way of death; he spoke of the Law, which contains promises of God's favour, and threatenings to transgressors. But the Prophet means here another thing, that is, that there was no hope of safety except the Jews submitted their neck to the yoke, and surrendered of themselves to their enemies; for if they pertinaciously defended themselves, God would be their enemy, for he had led the Chaldeans to assail them, and directed their counsels and their forces. He indeed confirms what he had said before, but at the same time he more particularly describes what was to be, that the Jews might lay aside their perverseness, and acknowledge that they could not escape the correction which they deserved.

The import of what is said is, that as the Chaldeans fought under the authority of God, they would be victorious; it was then in vain for the Jews to resist, as they could not escape, unless they overcame God himself, which was impossible. He leaves then but one hope to them, that is, humbly to acknowledge God's just judgment by submitting

of themselves [illegible] exile with a [illegible] it is not [illegible] he had [illegible] threatenings [illegible] humble [illegible] God in [illegible] to succumb.

Thou shalt say [illegible] *I set before you the way* [illegible] was the way of death [illegible] *city, shall die by the sword* [illegible] This was [illegible] flamed with rage when they heard that they were to perish in the holy city which God protected [illegible] sanctuary, and there [illegible] already dissipated all these [illegible] boldly threaten them, though they still alleged their vain pretences: he had shewed reasons enough why they could hope for nothing less than exile from God, for they had so many times, and so obstinately, and in such various ways provoked him. This, then, he says, is the way of death, it is by remaining in the city. And he mentions several kinds of evils, and shews that God was armed not only with a hostile sword, but would also employ famine and pestilence, so that he would kill some with the sword, consume some with famine, and destroy some with pestilence. Hence he shews that they would be so assailed on every side, that it would be in vain to attempt to escape; for when they shunned the sword, pestilence would meet them; and when they were preserved from the pestilence, the famine would consume them.

He then adds, *But he who went out to the Chaldeans, who besieged the city*, &c., that is, who willingly surrendered himself; for it was a sign of obedience when the Jews with a resigned mind received correction; and it was also an evidence of repentance, for they thus confessed that they were worthy of the heaviest punishment. This is the reason why the Prophet represents it as *the way of life* to go out wil

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of themselves to a temporal punishment, and by enduring exile with a resigned mind. This then is the meaning, and it is not different discourse, but the Prophet confirms what he had said before, and at the same time applies God's threatenings to the state of the people, so that they might humble themselves, and not think it of any use to resist God in their obstinacy, as they would at length be constrained to succumb.

Thou shalt say to this people, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death. Which was the way of death? *Whosoever,* he says, *abides in this city, shall die by the sword, or by famine, or by pestilence.* This was incredible to the Jews, and they were no doubt inflamed with rage when they heard that they were to perish in the holy city which God protected; for there he had his sanctuary, and there his rest was. But the Prophet had already dissipated all these delusions; he could, therefore, boldly threaten them, though they still alleged their vain pretences: he had shewed reasons enough why they could hope for nothing less than exile from God, for they had so many times, and so obstinately, and in such various ways provoked him. This, then, he says, is the *way of death,* it is by remaining in the city. And he mentions several kinds of evils, and shews that God was armed not only with a hostile sword, but would also employ famine and pestilence, so that he would kill some with the sword, consume some with famine, and destroy some with pestilence. Hence he shews that they would be so assailed on every side, that it would be in vain to attempt to escape; for when they shunned the sword, pestilence would meet them; and when they were preserved from the pestilence, the famine would consume them.

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lingly, and to make a surrender of themselves of their own accord to their enemies. And by saying, *who besiege you,* הצרים עליכם, *etserim olicam,* he wished to anticipate objections which any one of the people might have alleged,—"How can I dare thus to expose myself? for the Chaldeans besiege us, and it will be all over with me as to my life if I go forth as a suppliant to them." By no means, says the Prophet, for though they carry on a deadly war with the city, yet every one who of his own accord goes forth to them shall be safe, and shall find them ready to shew mercy. God would not have promised this had he not the Chaldeans in his own power, so that he could turn their minds as he pleased.

As to the verb נפל, *nuphel,* it means strictly to fall; but I consider that it signifies here to dwell, as in Genesis xxv. 27, where it is said that Ishmael dwelt in the sight of, or over against his brethren. They who render it "died" touch neither heaven nor earth. Some read, "his lot fell among his brethren;" but this is an unnatural rendering. There is, then, no doubt but that the verb means often to lie down, and hence to dwell; and yet I allow that the Prophet alludes to subjection; for we must remember what must have been their condition when they went over to the Chaldeans; they must have been subjected to great reproach. It was then no small humiliation; but yet we may properly render the verb to dwell. *He,* then, *who went out to the Chaldeans and dwelt with them,*[1] that is, who suffered himself to be led into exile, or who migrated according to their will from his own country to a foreign land—*he,* he says, *shall live,* and *his life shall be for a prey,* that is, he shall save his life, as when any one finds a prey and takes it as his own by stealth; for prey is to be taken here as an accidental gain. Whosoever, then, he says, shall not deem it too grievous a thing to submit to the Chaldeans, shall at least save his life.

In short, God intimates that the wickedness of the people

[1] "Shall go to," is the *Sept.*; "shall fly to," the *Vulg.*; "shall obey," the *Targ.*; it is omitted in *Syr.* *Blayney* is, "surrendereth himself." The verb, followed by על, as here, means to fall away to, or to join. See 2 Kings xxv. 11. "But he who goeth out and joins the Chaldeans, who besiege you, shall live," &c.—*Ed.*

had advanced so far, that it was not right to forgive them. What, then, was to be done by them? to submit with resignation and humility to a temporal punishment, and thus to cease to shut up the door of God's mercy. He, however, teaches them at the same time that no salvation could be hoped for by them until they were chastised. And hence we may learn a useful doctrine, and that is, that whenever we provoke God's wrath by our perverseness, we cannot be exempt from all punishment; and that we ought not to be impatient, especially when he punishes us moderately; and that provided we obtain eternal mercy, we ought submissively to bear paternal corrections. It follows,—

10. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord; it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.	10. Quia faciem meam contra urbem hanc in malum, et non in bonum, dicit Jehova; in manum regis Babylonis tradetur et exuret eam igni.

He again confirms what he had said, that it would be the way of death if the Jews remained fixed in the city, for this would be to struggle against God; for God is said to *set* his *face for evil*, since he had fully determined to punish that nation. To set the face is the same as to be resolute. Then God says that what he had resolved respecting the destruction of Jerusalem could not be changed. Now, what must at length be the issue when any one thinks that he can, against the will of God, escape death? As they who violently stumble against a stone break their legs, and arms, and head, too; so they who furiously stumble against God attain for themselves final ruin.[1]

We hence see why the Prophet added this verse: it was, that the Jews might not in their usual manner foster vain hopes; for to hope for any good was to contend with God himself. *Delivered*, he says, *shall be this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.* He intimates that Nebuchadnezzar would not only conquer the

[1] The phrase is not, "against this city," but "upon this city;" and such is the rendering of the *Sept.* and *Vulg.*, though the *Syr.* has "against." How could his face be set against it, not for good? God is said to set or fix his face *on* the city, and it was for doing it evil, and not for doing it good.—*Ed.*

people and triumph over a taken city, but that the city itself was doomed to destruction. It is, indeed, a most grievous thing when a city is wholly demolished: cities are often taken, and the conqueror removes the inhabitants here and there, while it remains still a habitable place; but God declares here that he would act more severely towards the city of Jerusalem, for it was to perish by fire. It follows,—

11. And touching the house of the king of Judah, *say*, Hear ye the word of the Lord;	11. Et ad domum (*vel*, palatium) regis Jehudah, Audite sermonem Jehovæ:
12. O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver *him that is* spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.	12. Domus David, sic dicit Jehova, judicate mane judicium (*sunt quidem duo verba, sed utrunque significat judicare; sensus autem est, judicare mature, et proferre rectum et æquum judicium; postea adjungit speciem unam,*) liberate spoliatum e manu oppressoris, ne exeat, tamquam iguis, indignatio mea, et ardeat, et non sit extinguens, a facie malitiæ studiorum ipsorum (*hoc est*, propter malitiam scelerum ipsorum).

Now the Prophet tells us that he was sent to the king and his counsellors. Hitherto he has been addressing the king and the whole people indiscriminately; but here a special message is committed to him to be delivered at the *palace* of the king; and he was to say that judgment was nigh him and his counsellors. But he is not now threatened as before, for there is a condition interposed: he exhorts them to repent, and indirectly promises them pardon, for in vain would he have spoken to them of repentance had he not given them some hopes of pardon and deliverance. He is not yet inconsistent with himself, for though the king was to be driven into exile, he might yet obtain some favour, after having submitted to a paternal correction. Though, then, the Prophet here exhorts the king and his counsellors to repent, he does yet shew that they were not to be wholly free from punishment, and yet he promises some mitigation.[1]

And this passage reminds us that we ought not to rush

[1] The verb "thou shalt say," or "say," at the beginning of verse 8, is to be understood here, "*say* also to the house," &c. So the *Vulg.* connects the sentence, and also the *Targ.* But the *Sept.*, *Syr.*, and the *Arab.* put the word "house" in the vocative case—"O house of the king of Judah, hear the word of the Lord." More consistent with the original is the former construction.—*Ed.*

headlong into despair when some great evil is suspended over us, and when God shews that we cannot wholly escape punishment. For there is nothing more unreasonable than that the fear by which God restores us to himself should be the cause of despair, so that we repent not; for though God's wrath be not wholly removed, yet it is a great thing that it is mitigated, which is an alleviation accompanying the evil itself.

. In short, the Prophet intimates that God's wrath might be alleviated, though not wholly pacified, provided the king and his counsellors began to act rightly and justly. But he mentions the *house of David,* not for honour's sake, but, on the contrary, by way of reproach; nor does he refer to David, as some unmeaningly assert, because he ruled justly and was a most excellent and upright king; but the Prophet had regard to God's covenant. For we know that they deceived themselves when they thought that they were to be exempt from trouble through a peculiar privilege, because God had chosen that family, and promised that the kingdom would be perpetual. Thus hypocrites appropriate to their own advantage whatever God has promised; and at the same time they boast, though without faith and repentance, that God is bound to them. Such, then, was the presumption of the king and his counsellors; for they who were David's descendants doubted not but that they were exempt from the common lot of men, and that they were, as they say, sacred beings. Hence the Prophet says, in contempt, *The house of David!* that is, "let these vain boastings now cease, for God will not spare you, though you may a hundred times boast that you are the descendants of David." And at the same time he upbraids them with having become wholly degenerate, for God had made a covenant with David on the condition that he served him faithfully; but his posterity were become perfidious and apostates. Therefore the Prophet brought before them the name of David, in order that he might the more reproach them, because they were become wholly unlike their father, having departed from his piety.

Thus saith Jehovah, he adds, *Judge ye judgment.* There

was no doubt a great liberty taken by the king and his courtiers in committing plunder, for the Prophet would not have here recommended justice to them had they not wholly neglected what was just and right. As, then, there was no care to administer justice, the Prophet bade them to recognise what was due to God and to his people. But it was a most grievous trial to all the godly to see that the sacred house, in which the living image of God ought to have shone forth brightly, was become a house of spoils, where robbers dwelt, who with impunity plundered all around them. When, therefore, the state of things is in such a disorder that the very judges, whom God has set over his Church, are like robbers, let us know that such a thing happened formerly; nor is there a doubt but that God thus took vengeance on the impiety and wickedness of the people, for he would have never suffered that house to be so contaminated and so filled with so many crimes, had not the people been unworthy of a good and faithful king and of upright counsellors. Let us, then, know that the Prophet exhorted the king and his counsellors to execute justice, because they had forgotten their office, and were become like rapacious wolves.[1]

He specifies one act, *Free ye the spoiled from the hand of his oppressor.* Some read, "from the hand of the fraudulent," as though עשק, *oshek*, should mean to oppress by calumny and malice, or by fraudulent means; but it is to be taken otherwise here. Some distinguish between the two words עשק,

[1] The correct rendering is, "The right defend ye in the morning." The common meaning of דין is to defend, to vindicate, to plead for, or contend for: it means, also, to rule with authority. It is rendered often in our version to judge, while it ought to be to defend. See Genesis xxx. 6; Psalms l. 4; cxxxv. 14. "In the morning" may be taken literally or figuratively. The morning was the time observed by good judges to decide matters of judgment: in corrupt times the judges or princes spent the morning in drinking. See Eccles. x. 16. Thus the judges are here required to reassume the ancient practice of deciding causes in the morning. See Exodus xviii. 13. The phrase, "in the morning," means also to do a thing promptly, fully, and diligently. The very same words are used in Psalm ci. 8, and rendered in our version "early," only the word for morning is in the plural number—"in the mornings," literally. Then, if taken figuratively, the phrase means—promptly, carefully, diligently—"Defend carefully the right." The version of *Blayney* is singular, but inadmissible—"Judge ye, searching out right." There is no instance of the verb דין being used intransitively, and "in the morning" is given by all the Versions and the *Targ.*—*Ed.*

oshek, and גזל, *gesal*, and say that the first means to retain a deposit or wages, or anything that belongs to another, and that the latter signifies to take a thing by force, to plunder. But this difference, as it appears, is not observed by the Prophet, for he says, "Free ye the plundered or the spoiled." From whose hand? from "the hand of the oppressor." As, then, these two words correspond, I doubt not but that גזל, *gesal*, means both to take by force and to plunder; and that though עשק, *oshek*, means often fraudulently to oppress, yet not always. However this may be, God intimates that neither the king nor his counsellors had any care for the poor, so as to repress violence, and robbery, and plunder. Then the very judges themselves were the associates of robbers, for they allowed them with impunity to rob and plunder without affording any aid to helpless men when they were thus wickedly harassed. There is, however, no doubt but that God would have them to perform their duties towards all, both rich and poor, without exception; but as injustice in this particular was especially seen, this is the reason why by stating a part for the whole he specified only one thing.[1]

He then adds, *Lest my indignation go forth like fire, and burn, and there be none to extinguish it.* Here the Prophet intimates, that except the king and his courtiers repented, it was all over with them. There is then a contrast to be understood here between that paternal correction of which he had spoken, and the destruction of which the Prophet now speaks. God's indignation had been already kindled, nor could it be immediately extinguished; and though they had to suffer, yet the issue would have been happy and according to their wishes: but he here declares that there would be an irreconcilable war with God, except they laboured to return to his favour. He adds, *On account of the wickedness of their doings.* There is here a change of person, except we read כם, *cam*, "you;" but this sort of change often occurs in Scripture. The Prophet, after hav-

[1] This sentence is as follows,—"And rescue the plundered from the hand of the violent," or him who uses violence. The *Vulg.* alone has "calumniator" for the last word, which is wholly improper; "who wrongs him" is the *Sept.*; "who oppresses him" is the *Syr.* and *Arab.* The word means to oppress by force or violence.—*Ed.*

ing addressed them, says now, "on account of the wickedness of their doings," as though having finished his discourse, he spoke of them as being absent, or as though God, after having given orders to his Prophet, then added, "I denounce this on them, because they have so deserved."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not, by new crimes, daily to kindle thy wrath, we may not proceed to obstinacy or contempt; and since it is good for us to be chastised by thine hand, grant that we may resignedly submit to thy scourges, and allow thee to act the part of a Father towards us, in restoring us to the right way, and never cease to hope in thee, even when thou seemest to be angry with us; but may our hope regard that issue which thou promisest, even that evils themselves shall be an aid to our salvation, until having gone through all the miseries of the present life, we shall come into that blessed rest which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us.—Amen.

Lecture Eightieth.

13. Behold, I *am* against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, saith the Lord; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

14. But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord; and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

13. Ecce ego contra te, quæ habitas in valle, petra in planitie (*vel*, petræ planitiei, *alii vertunt*) dicit Jehova; qui dicitis, Quis descendet contra nos? et quis ingrediatur habitacula nostra?

14. Et visitabo super vos secundum fructum studiorum vestrorum, dicit Jehova; et accendam ignem in sylva ejus, et consumet quicquid est in circuitu ejus.

THOUGH the whole nation was corrupt in the time of the Prophet, yet Jerusalem was the head and seat of all evils, especially as there was there more licentiousness; and then they thought that the Prophets had no liberty there, as though the citizens were, by a peculiar privilege, exempt from all reproof; and, lastly, the very situation of the city gave them courage, for when they regarded the height of their walls, their towers, and fortresses, they thought themselves beyond the reach of danger. Hence was the security

which the Prophet now condemns; and, therefore, he calls it *the inhabitant of the valley.*

Jerusalem, we know, was situated on small hills: the Mount Sion had two tops; and then there were hills contiguous, especially towards Lebanon; there was, however, a plain on every side. And then if we except Mount Sion, Jerusalem was in a valley; for it was surrounded, we know, by mountains. There were mountains around it, as it is said in Psalm cxxv. 2. Now, its very situation gave confidence to the citizens, as access to it was difficult. They, therefore, thought that enemies could not come into that valley, which kept them inclosed, as in a fortified place. This is the reason why the Prophet called not the city by its own name, but said that it *dwelt in the valley;* and afterwards he called it a *rock in the plain;* for יָשָׁר, *isher*, is straight, and hence מִישׁוֹר, *mishur*, means a level ground. The whole region was then a continued plain as far as the mountains. Jerusalem itself had also, as we have said, its small hills; it was therefore, as it were, a *rock in a plain.*[1]

We now see for what purpose the Prophet used this circumlocution, even because the Jews gloried in the position of their city, as though it was impregnable; and also, because

[1] Of all explanations of this passage, this is the most satisfactory. Mount Sion was surrounded by a valley, and that valley by contiguous mountains. The city, therefore, was a valley with a rock or a mountain in the midst, called here the rock of the level ground. The sentence may, indeed, be thus rendered, "The inhabitant of the valley of the rock of the level ground." "The valley of the rock" means, in this case, the valley around the rock or the mountain; then the valley is farther designated as the level ground.

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Blayney's version is, "O thou inhabitant of the levelled hollow of a rock." He considered that Mount Sion is meant, the residence of the house of David, and so called, because the top was levelled. Then he rendered the following sentence, "Who shall make a breach on us?" But the difficulty is to understand "the levelled hollow," and how to make the original to bear such a rendering. Doubtless, the version of *Calvin*, or that of *Venema*, which is not very different, is the best.—*Ed.*

ing addressed them, says now, "on account of the wickedness of their doings," as though having finished his discourse, he spoke of them as being absent, or as though God, after having given orders to his Prophet, then added, "I denounce this on them, because they have so deserved."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not, by new crimes, daily to kindle thy wrath, we may not proceed to obstinacy or contempt; and since it is good for us to be chastised by thine hand, grant that we may resignedly submit to thy scourges, and allow thee to act the part of a Father towards us, in restoring us to the right way, and never cease to hope in thee, even when thou seemest to be angry with us; but may our hope regard that issue which thou promisest, even that evils themselves shall be an aid to our salvation, until having gone through all the miseries of the present life, we shall come into that blessed rest which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us.—Amen.

Lecture Eightieth.

13. Behold, I *am* against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, saith the Lord; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

14. But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord; and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

13. Ecce ego contra te, quæ habitas in valle, petra in planitie (*vel*, petræ planitiei, *alii vertunt*) dicit Jehova; qui dicitis, Quis descendet contra nos? et quis ingrediatur habitacula nostra?

14. Et visitabo super vos secundum fructum studiorum vestrorum, dicit Jehova; et accendam ignem in sylva ejus, et consumet quicquid est in circuitu ejus.

THOUGH the whole nation was corrupt in the time of the Prophet, yet Jerusalem was the head and seat of all evils, especially as there was there more licentiousness; and then they thought that the Prophets had no liberty there, as though the citizens were, by a peculiar privilege, exempt from all reproof; and, lastly, the very situation of the city gave them courage, for when they regarded the height of their walls, their towers, and fortresses, they thought themselves beyond the reach of danger. Hence was the security

which the Prophet now condemns; and, therefore, he calls it *the inhabitant of the valley.*

Jerusalem, we know, was situated on small hills: the Mount Sion had two tops; and then there were hills contiguous, especially towards Lebanon; there was, however, a plain on every side. And then if we except Mount Sion, Jerusalem was in a valley; for it was surrounded, we know, by mountains. There were mountains around it, as it is said in Psalm cxxv. 2. Now, its very situation gave confidence to the citizens, as access to it was difficult. They, therefore, thought that enemies could not come into that valley, which kept them inclosed, as in a fortified place. This is the reason why the Prophet called not the city by its own name, but said that it *dwelt in the valley;* and afterwards he called it a *rock in the plain;* for יָשָׁר, *isher*, is straight, and hence מִישׁוֹר, *mishur*, means a level ground. The whole region was then a continued plain as far as the mountains. Jerusalem itself had also, as we have said, its small hills; it was therefore, as it were, a *rock in a plain.*[1]

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the vicinity of the mountains, as well as the plain, gave them great advantages. And we know how disposed men are to take to a false security when there is apparently no danger; but on the contrary, they think of various defences and aids from which they expect to derive help. It is, therefore, this false boasting that the Prophet condemns, when he calls Jerusalem the *inhabitant of the valley*, and then says, that it was a *rock in the plain.*

What follows makes this more clear, *Who say, Who shall come down against us? and, Who shall enter into our habitations?* The verb יחת, *icheet*, some take in the sense of tearing, "Who shall make a breach on us?" They derive the word from חתת, *chetat;* but it is rather from נחת, *nechat*, to descend; for the first meaning would be too strained. The Prophet speaks according to the opinion of the people, who thought themselves sufficiently fortified against all the attacks of their enemies. It may have been, indeed, that they did not speak thus openly; but the Prophet had regard to the hidden thoughts of their hearts, when he ascribed to them this boasting,—that they dwelt in an impregnable place, as the access to it was formidable; for they spoke boldly, "Who shall descend to us?[1] who will enter our houses?" as though they had their nest in the clouds. They intimated that their state would be safe, because their enemies would not dare to come nigh them, or would be disgracefully repelled if they dared, as it would be enough for them to close their gates.

But God, on the contrary, says, *Behold I will* come *to thee,* or against thee, and *will visit* thee. There is, indeed, a change of number; for he says, *I will visit you,* for he had begun by saying, "Ye who say," האמרים, *eamrim. I will visit upon you,* he says, *the fruit of your doings;* that is,

[1] The *Sept.* and *Arab.* are, "Who will alarm us?" the *Vulg.*, "Who will smite us?" *Syr.*, "Who can come against us?" and the *Targ.*, "Who will descend against us?" The verb חתת, is intransitive, and if it be here in Hiphil, it will not admit of the preposition על, which comes here after it. This sufficiently proves that it is נחת, to come down, to descend, which requires this very preposition. See Psalm xxxviii. 2. This being clearly the case, the view of *Blayney*, as to "the levelled hollow of a rock," must be wrong, for to "descend" into Mount Sion, would be no suitable expression.—*Ed.*

"I will deal with you according to what you have done, as your works deserve." Merit is to be taken for reward. Then God threatens that he would render to the Jews what they merited, because they had not ceased to provoke his wrath.

He adds, lastly, *I will kindle a fire in its forest.* Some take "forest" metaphorically for the neighbouring towns; but this seems foreign to the Prophet's meaning. I do not, indeed, deny but that there is a metaphor in the words; but then the word forest is not to be applied to towns and villages, but to the buildings of the city itself, according to a mode of speaking elsewhere used by the Prophets. As their houses were built of a large quantity of wood, of tall and most choice trees, the Prophet compares this mass of wood to a forest. We may, however, give a simpler explanation, and I know not whether it be more suitable that the Prophet points out Lebanon. He then means by the *forest* of the city the trees of Lebanon, which we know were particularly fine, for their loftiness were everywhere known; and we know also that they were very large. As, then, a part of their false glory was Mount Lebanon, the Prophet distinctly intimates that it would serve as a help to burn the city itself; for when God burned Jerusalem, he would take from the vicinity materials for the purpose.[1]

Now, as we understand the meaning of the Prophet, let us learn how to apply this passage. We have said elsewhere that nothing is more hateful to God than false confidence; when men, relying on their own resources, promise to themselves a happy and a safe condition, they become torpid in their own security. Thus it comes, that they despise God, and never flee to him; they scorn his judgments, and at length are carried away by a mad impulse to every kind of insolence. This is the reason why the Prophets so often and so sharply reprove secure men, for they become presumptuous towards God when they are touched by no regard for him, and with no fear of him. They then not only dis-

[1] "The word 'forest' is often metaphorically taken for a city in the prophetical writings, because its stately buildings, or its principal inhabitants, resemble tall cedars standing in their several ranks. See chap. xxii. 7; Isaiah xxvii. 24; Ezek. xx. 46; Zech. xi. 1."—*Lowth.*

honour God by transferring the hope of their safety to mere means or such helps as they foolishly depend on, but they also think that they are not under the authority of God. Hence it is, that they promise themselves impunity, and thus become wholly hardened in their sins. Now follows—

CHAPTER XXII.

1. Thus saith the Lord, Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,

2. And say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates;

3. Thus saith the Lord, Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.

1. Sic dicit Jehova, Descende in domum regis Jehudah, et loquere illic sermonem hunc,

2. Et dices, Audi sermonem Jehovæ, rex Jehudah, qui sedes super solium Davidis, tu et servi tui, et populus tuus qui ingredimini per portas has:

3. Sic dicit Jehova, Facite judicium et justitiam, et eripite spoliatum e manu oppressoris; peregrinum, pupilum, et viduam ne fraudetis (*Hieronymus hoc verbum ubique vertit*, contristari, *vel*, tristitia afficere; *significat autem potius* inferre violentiam, *aut* fraudulenter nocere;) ne violentiam exerceatis (*alii vertunt*, אל תחמסו,) et sanguinem innocentem ne fundatis in loco isto.

The Prophet is again bidden to reprove the king and his counsellors; but the exhortation is at the same time extended to the whole people. It was necessary to begin with the head, that the common people might know that it was not a matter to be trifled with, as God would not spare, no, not even the king himself, and his courtiers; for a greater terror seized the lower orders, when they saw the highest laid prostrate. That what is here taught might then penetrate more effectually into the hearts of all, the Prophet is bid to address the king himself and his courtiers: he is afterwards bidden to include also the whole body of the people. And hence it appears, that there was some hope of favour yet remaining, provided the king and the whole people received the admonitions of the Prophet; provided

their repentance and conversion were sincere, God was still ready to forgive them.

We must at the same time observe, as I have already said, that they could not escape the calamity that was at hand; but exile would have been much milder, and also their return would have been more certain, and they would have found in various ways that they had not been rejected by God, though for a time chastised. As then we now say, that a hope of pardon was set before them, this is not to be so understood as that they could avert the destruction of the city; for it had once for all been determined by God to drive the people into a temporary exile, and also to put an end for a time to their sacrifices; for this dreadful desolation was to be a proof that the people had been extremely ungrateful to God, and especially that their obstinacy could not be endured in having so long despised the Prophets and the commands of God. However the hope of mitigation as to their punishment was given them, provided they were touched by a right feeling, so as to endeavour to return into favour with God. But as Jeremiah effected nothing by so many admonitions, they were rendered more inexcusable.

We now see the design of what is here said, even that the Jews, having been so often proved guilty, might cease to complain that they suffered anything undeservedly; for they had been often admonished, yea, almost in numberless instances, and God had offered mercy, provided they were reclaimable. I come now to the words—

Thus saith Jehovah, Go down[1] *to the house of the king.* We see that the Prophet was endued with so great a courage that the dignity of the king's name did not daunt him, so as to prevent him to perform what was commanded him. We have seen elsewhere similar instances; but whenever such cases occur, they deserve to be noticed. *First,* the

[1] Or "descend;" it appears that Jeremiah was in the Temple when he had this commission. And it would be better to render the first words, "Thus said Jehovah," as it is a narrative of what had taken place. In chap. xviii. 1, it is said the word of the Lord *came* to Jeremiah, and then he was commanded to *go down* to the potter's house; which intimates that he was at the time in the Temple, officiating probably in his course as a priest.—*Ed.*

servants of God ought boldly to discharge their office, and not to flatter the great and the rich, nor remit anything of their own authority when they meet with dignity and greatness. *Secondly*, let those who seem to be more eminent than others learn, that whatever eminence they may possess cannot avail them, but that they ought to submit to prophetic instruction. We have before seen that the Prophet was sent to reprove and rebuke even the highest, and to shew no respect of persons. (Jer. i. 10.) So now, here he shews that he had, as it were, the whole world under his feet, for in executing his office, he reproved the king himself and all his princes.

But he speaks of the king as *sitting on the throne of David;* but not, as I have already said, for the sake of honour, but for the purpose of enhancing his guilt; for he occupied a sacred throne, of which he was wholly unworthy. For though God is said to sit in the midst of the gods, because by him kings rule, we yet know that the throne of David was more eminent than any other; for it was a priestly kingdom and a type of that celestial kingdom which was afterwards fully revealed in Christ. As, then, the kings of Judah, the descendants of David, were types of Christ, less tolerable was their impiety, when, unmindful of their vocation, they had departed from the piety of their father David and became wholly degenerated. So the Prophet, by mentioning the house of Israel and the house of Jacob, no doubt condemned the Jews, because they had become unlike the holy patriarch. We now, then, understand the object of the Prophet when he says, "Hear the word of Jehovah, thou king of Judah, who *sittest on the throne of David.*"

But that his reproof might have its just weight, the Prophet carefully shews that he brought nothing but what had been committed to him from above; this is the reason why he repeats, *thou shalt say*, "Thus saith Jehovah, Go down, speak, and say." From the king he comes to the courtiers, and from them to the whole people. *Thou*, he says, *and thy servants;* by the king's servants the Scripture means, all those ministers who were his counsellors, who were appointed to administer justice and who exercised authority. But we must

notice, that at last he addresses the whole people. We hence see that what he taught belonged in common to all, though he began with the king and his counsellors, that the common people might not think that they would be unpunished if they despised the doctrine to which even kings were to submit.

He says, first, *Do judgment and justice.* This belonged especially to the king and his judges and governors; for private individuals, we know, had no power to protect their property; for though every one ought to resist wrongs and evil doings, yet this was the special duty of the judges whom God had armed with the sword for this purpose. To *do judgment,* means to render to every one according to his right; but when the two words, judgment and justice, are connected together, by justice we are to understand equity, so that every one has his own right; and by judgment is to be understood the execution of due punishment; for it is not enough for the judge to decide what is right, except he restrains the wicked when they audaciously resist. To do judgment, then, is to defend the weak and the innocent, as it were, with an armed hand.[1]

He then adds, *Rescue the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor.* He repeats what we observed in the last chapter; and here under one thing he includes the duty of judges, even that they are ever to oppose what is wrong and to check the audacity of the wicked, for they can never be induced willingly to conduct themselves with moderation and quietness. As, then, they are to be restrained by force, he says, "Rescue the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor." Of the word גזול, *gesul,* we have spoken before; but by this form of speaking God intimates that it is not enough for

[1] The verb here is different from that in chap. xxi. 12, though rendered in our version the same—"execute." It is עשה, to do, to act, but is used in a wide sense, like *facio* in Latin. To do judgment is to judge or condemn, that is, the guilty; to do justice is to justify or acquit, that is, the innocent. Perhaps the best rendering would be, "Administer judgment and justice;" the former to the guilty, and the latter to the innocent.

Blayney's version can by no means be approved, "Do right and justice," as the distinctive character of the two acts is not expressed. "Do judgment and justice," are all the Versions and the *Targum.—Ed.*

the judge to abstain from tyranny and cruelty, and not to stimulate the wicked nor favour them, except he also acknowledges that he has been appointed by God for this end—to rescue the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor, and not to hesitate to face hatred and danger in the discharge of his office.

The Prophet now adds other things which he had not mentioned in the preceding chapter; *defraud not*,[1] he says, *the stranger and the orphan and the widow.* It is what is often said in Scripture, that it is not right to defraud any one; for God would exempt all from wrong, and not only strangers, orphans, and widows; but as orphans have no knowledge or wisdom, they are exposed, as it were, to plunder; and also widows, because they are in themselves helpless; and strangers, because they have no friends to undertake their cause; hence God, in an especial manner, requires a regard to be had to strangers, orphans, and widows. There is also another reason; for when their right is rendered to strangers, orphans, and widows, equity no doubt shines forth more conspicuously. When any one brings friends with him, and employs them in the defence of his cause, the judge is thereby influenced; and he who is a native will have his relations and neighbours to support his cause; and he who is rich and possessing power will also influence the judge, so that he dares not do anything notoriously wrong; but when the stranger, or the orphan, or the widow comes before the judge, he can with impunity oppress them all. Hence if he judges rightly, it is no doubt a conspicuous proof of his integrity and uprightness. This,

[1] So it is rendered by *Blayney;* by the *Vulg.* and *Targ.*, "Make not sad;" by the *Sept.*, "Tyrannize not over;" and by the *Syr.*, "Wrong not." The verb means to press down, to depress, and hence to oppress. With this the next verb is connected by ו in many copies, and by all the Versions except the *Arab.*, and by the *Targum;* and it means to do wrong by force or violence, outrageously to injure, or to deal unjustly with, to plunder. They were not to press them down by denying them their rights, nor violently to take their things away from them, or to plunder them.

We may render the passage as *Gataker* does, "And the stranger, the orphan, and the widow oppress not, wrong not," or plunder not. A similar passage is in chap. vii. 6. The word rendered there "oppress" is different, עשׁק, and more general in its meaning, including the two ideas here—oppression by denying them their rights, and by plundering them.—*Ed.*

then, is the reason why God everywhere commends these cases when he speaks of right and equitable judgments.

He further adds, *Execute ye judgment, and shed not innocent blood in this place.* These things also were matters belonging to the judges. But it was a horribly monstrous thing for the throne of David to have been so defiled as to have become, as it were, a den of robbers. Wherever there is any pretence to justice, there ought to be there some fear or shame; but as we have said, that tribunal was in a peculiar manner sacred to God. As then the king and his counsellors were become like robbers, and as they so corrupted the throne of David that all impiety prevailed, and they hesitated not to plunder on every side, as though they lived in a house of plunder; this was, as I have said, a sad and shameful spectacle.[1]

But we ought the more carefully to notice this passage, that we may learn to strengthen ourselves against bad examples, lest the impiety of men should overturn our faith; when we see in God's Church things in such a disorder, that those who glory in the name of God are become like robbers, we must beware lest we become, on this account, alienated from true religion. We must, indeed, detest such monsters, but we must take care lest God's word, through men's wickedness, should lose its value in our esteem. We ought, then, to remember the admonition of Christ, to hear the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses's seat. (Matt. xxiii. 2.) Thus it behoved the Jews to venerate that royal throne, on which God had inscribed certain marks of his glory. Though they saw that it was polluted by the crimes and evil deeds of men, yet they ought to have retained some regard for it on account of that expression, "This is my rest for ever."

[1] There is first in this passage a general direction, "Administer ye judgment and justice;" and then there is a specification which refers first to justice and then to judgment, the order, as is commonly the case, being reversed. It was an act of "justice" to rescue the plundered from the hands of the plunderer. Then they were forbidden to administer wrong "judgment," so as to depress and plunder the stranger, the orphan, and the widow, and to shed innocent blood. See Psalm xciv. 6. It shews a bad state of society when the wicked and the guilty are not punished; but it is still worse when the helpless are oppressed, and the innocent are condemned.—*Ed.*

ducing his own name as a pledge. The reason is similar as to threatenings; for so great is the false security of sinners, that they are deaf until God, as it were, with force penetrates into their hearts. Hence he says, that God made an oath by himself; for it seemed incredible to the Jews, that the family which had been set apart by God from the world, would ever perish. It now follows:

6. For thus saith the Lord unto the king's house of Judah, Thou *art* Gilead unto me, *and* the head of Lebanon: *yet* surely I will make thee a wilderness, *and* cities *which* are not inhabited.

6. Quoniam dicit Jehova super domum regis Jehudah, Guilead, tu mihi caput Libani, si non posuero te desertum, tanquam urbes quæ non habitantur.

He confirms the preceding declaration, and explains more at large what had been stated sufficiently clear; for the false boasting of the Jews could hardly be restrained, as they still thought that the kingdom in the family of David would be permanent and exempt from any danger of a change.

But interpreters differ as to the meaning of the words. I will not repeat their views, nor is it necessary: I will only state what seems to me to be the real meaning. All others indeed give a different explanation; but the Prophet, I doubt not, means the same thing as we have observed in chap. vii. 12; where he says, "Go to Shiloh, and see what is the state of that place, for the ark of the covenant had a long time dwelt there." Though, then, they thought that place sacred, yet it was reduced to desolation; and thus it must have become a dreadful spectacle to the whole people. For the same reason now, as it seems to me, the Prophet compares Lebanon to Mount Gilead; for what some say, that Gilead was the chief city of the ten tribes, has nothing in it. But we must remember the state of things at that time; the kingdom of Israel was wholly demolished when our Prophet spoke these words. Judea had indeed been much reduced by many calamities; but still some kind of a kingdom remained. Then by Mount Gilead the Prophet doubtless meant, by stating a part for the whole, the kingdom of Israel, but for a purpose different from that assigned by interpreters, even because the whole land of Israel was then laid waste; for all the inhabitants had been led into

exile, and all the spoils had been removed, and nothing had escaped the rapacity and cruelty of their enemies.

Since, then, the land of Israel had been reduced unto desolation, God says now, that Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah would not be of greater value in his sight than the whole country of the ten tribes had been, which was doubtless larger in extent and in wealth. And this meaning may be easily gathered from the words of the passage; he does not say, "Thou art like Gilead the head of Lebanon;" but, *Gilead to me art thou the head of Lebanon.* And he calls Jerusalem Lebanon, because it was, as it were, the queen of that land; for by Mount Lebanon he designated whatever was precious in that country, for the reason we mentioned yesterday. As to Gilead, I do not consider that the Prophet refers especially to the city, but by stating a part for the whole, he includes the whole country, and for this reason, because Mount Gilead was full of many fruitful trees, and particularly of the balsam and the rosin tree, and of many odoriferous herbs and aromatics, which at this day are from thence brought to different parts of the world. And hence we found it asked in chap. viii. 22, "Is there no rosin in Gilead? is there no medicine found there to heal the Church?" Why was mention made then of Mount Gilead? even because there grew the best aromatics, and especially the balsam tree, and also many odoriferous trees and most precious fruits.

The meaning then is, "What dost thou think thyself to be? or, for what reason dost thou trust so much in thyself? I did not spare Mount Gilead and that extensive country which was much superior to thee; what means then this foolish presumption, that thou persuadest thyself that all danger is far off? Thou shalt be to me as Gilead. Think of my judgment on Mount Gilead, and of the dreadful desolation of the land of Israel; the same which you may now see there shall happen to thee." We now perceive in what sense the Prophet says, that before God the *head of Lebanon*, that is, Jerusalem itself, which ruled over Lebanon, would *become like Gilead.*[1]

[1] That "the top (or head) of Lebanon," means Jerusalem, or the city

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exile, and all the spoils had been removed, and nothing had escaped the rapacity and cruelty of their enemies.

Since, then, the land of Israel had been reduced unto desolation, God says now, that Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah would not be of greater value in his sight than the whole country of the ten tribes had been, which was doubtless larger in extent and in wealth. And this meaning may be easily gathered from the words of the passage; he does not say, "Thou art like Gilead the head of Lebanon;" but, *Gilead to me art thou the head of Lebanon.* And he calls Jerusalem Lebanon, because it was, as it were, the queen of that land; for by Mount Lebanon he designated whatever was precious in that country, for the reason we mentioned yesterday. As to Gilead, I do not consider that the Prophet refers especially to the city, but by stating a part for the whole, he includes the whole country, and for this reason, because Mount Gilead was full of many fruitful trees, and particularly of the balsam and the rosin tree, and of many odoriferous herbs and aromatics, which at this day are from thence brought to different parts of the world. And hence we found it asked in chap. viii. 22, "Is there no rosin in Gilead? is there no medicine found there to heal the Church?" Why was mention made then of Mount Gilead? even because there grew the best aromatics, and especially the balsam tree, and also many odoriferous trees and most precious fruits.

The meaning then is, "What dost thou think thyself to be? or, for what reason dost thou trust so much in thyself? I did not spare Mount Gilead and that extensive country which was much superior to thee; what means then this foolish presumption, that thou persuadest thyself that all danger is far off? Thou shalt be to me as Gilead. Think of my judgment on Mount Gilead, and of the dreadful desolation of the land of Israel; the same which you may now see there shall happen to thee." We now perceive in what sense the Prophet says, that before God the *head of Lebanon*, that is, Jerusalem itself, which ruled over Lebanon, would *become like Gilead.*[1]

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7. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons; and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast *them* into the fire.

7. Et præparabo (*vertunt alii*, sanctificabo, *ut etiam* קדשׁ *hoc significat*, præparabo *igitur*) adversum te perditores (*aut*, vastatores; שׁחת *significat perdere, et redigere in nihilum, et corrumpere, unde nomen* משׁחתים, *quod hic ponitur*,) virum et arma ejus (*aut*, instrumenta bellica, vasa *transferunt*,) et exscindent electionem cedrorum tuarum (*hoc est*, electissimas quasque cedros tuas,) et conjicient in ignem.

He expresses the manner, for he had only said before, that the ruin of the city Jerusalem was nigh at hand; he adds, that *destroyers* would come and those well armed with *warlike instruments*, who would *cut down all the choicest cedars* and *cast them into the fire.* But he reminds them, that those destroyers would not come of themselves or through an impulse of their own, but through the secret operation of God; for if the Jews had thought that they had to do only with the Chaldeans, there would have been nothing to call forth the exercise of a religious principle; but the Prophet distinctly declares, that the Chaldeans would be the ministers of God, for they would be roused

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In short, these two things ought to be noticed,—first, that God had in readiness many ways by which he could punish the Jews. For the contempt of the ungodly arises, because they dream that God is unarmed and has not always the execution, as they say, ready at hand. Hence the Prophet shews that the Chaldeans would be ready as soon as God hissed for them, or gave them a sign. This is one thing. Secondly, it ought to be observed, that he reminds them that the Chaldeans would be the scourge of God, that the Jews might not think that they contended with mortals, but might know that they were summoned to render an account of their life, because they had too long been rebellious against God and his Prophets. This is what we must understand by the word *prepare*.[1]

Now as to the *choice cedars*, the Prophet again alludes to Mount Lebanon and to the forest of Jerusalem, which was mentioned yesterday. The word forest may, however, be applied to the buildings; for the Jews built their chambers for the most part of cedar wood, as it is well known; we may then apply this to their splendid and sumptuous houses; but we may also take it without a figure and apply it to the trees of Mount Lebanon. But the chief ornament of the country were the noble trees on that Mount; hence, by

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cedars, the Prophet no doubt designated whatever was splendid at Jerusalem and in the country around it. It follows,—

8. And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city?

9. Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.

8. Et transibunt gentes multæ per urbem hanc, et dicent quisque socio suo (vir ad socium suum, *ad verbum,*) cur fecit Jehova in hunc modum urbi huic magnæ?

9. Et dicent, Quia dereliquerunt fœdus Jehovæ Dei sui, et sese inclinarunt coram diis alienis, et coluerunt eos.

The Prophet shews in these words how blind the Jews were as to their own ruin, in disregarding in so refractory a manner the judgment of God. The words no doubt embrace two contrasts; he compares mortal men with God, and those many nations with him alone. The Jews could not bear God as their judge, and were still refractory and strove by their perverseness to overcome him. Then the Prophet says, that as they would not endure to be judged by God, judges would come who would pronounce on them a free impartial sentence; and who were they to be? the heathens. And then, as the Jews would not obey the one true God, the Prophet sets many nations in contrast with the one true God.

We hence see the full import of these words, *Pass shall many nations through this city;*[1] that is, God has hitherto adorned this city with many privileges, so that it became like a miracle to foreigners, for so conspicuous was the dignity of this city, that it attracted the notice of all, and its fame was known far and wide. Now, he says, this city shall be deprived of all its ornaments, when God shall depart from it. *Pass,* then, he says, *shall many nations through this city, and they will inquire, every one of his friend, Why hath Jehovah done thus to this city?* Jeremiah, no doubt, indirectly condemns, not only the sloth, but also the insensibility which had so demented the Jews, that they never duly reflected on God's judgment, nor were ever touched by the

[1] So the Versions, "through," and not "by," as in our version; it is "nigh" in the *Targ.* The preposition is עַל, upon, over, most commonly. It may mean the passing over the city when in ruins.—*Ed.*

curses of the Law. He then shews that there would be more understanding and wisdom in the Gentiles, for on seeing Jerusalem overthrown and wholly demolished, they would know that this had not happened by chance, but was an evidence of vengeance from heaven. We thus see that he upbraided the Jews with their own stupidity, as they did not consider the judgment of God; but he ascribed to the nations wisdom and the spirit of inquiry; for they would ask, "Why has Jehovah done thus to this city?"

"The nations," he says, "will understand what ye do not comprehend, even that this city will exhibit an example of dreadful vengeance, and this will be the subject of their inquiry; but while God now of his own free will foretells this to you, ye close your ears; surely there would be no need of much inquiry in a matter so clear, were you not deaf and blind, and indeed obstinate, for God of his own accord warns you beforehand. What, then, can this be, that God forewarns you and ye refuse to hear him, except that the devil bewitches you?"

And he says, *this great city;* for its ruin was more remarkable on account of its greatness. When a small town is destroyed, hardly any account is made of the event; but when a city falls, which was everywhere celebrated for its largeness, and also for the extraordinary benefits conferred on it by God, it excites the wonder of all, as though it had fallen from the clouds.

He afterwards adds, that there would be not only a spirit of inquiry among the nations, but that every one would become spontaneously a judge of the whole people: *they shall answer*, he says, *because they have forsaken the covenant of Jehovah their God.* Now, when Jeremiah declares that all the nations would become the judges of the people, he no doubt intended to condemn the false confidence in which they proudly indulged. At the same time, he says, "they have forsaken the covenant of Jehovah their God," in order that he might take away the plea of ignorance. For they had not only deprived the eternal God of his own right and authority, but they had become doubly wicked, because God had made himself familiarly known to them. As, then, true

religion had been fully revealed to them in the Law, hence their perverseness and wicked and base ingratitude appeared, for they had rejected God thus made known to them, *and they bowed down before foreign gods and served them.* I only touch here on these points, for they have been elsewhere explained. It follows,—

10. Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; *but* weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.

10. Ne fleatis (*vel*, ne lugeatis) super mortuum, et ne condoleatis ei; flete flendo super eum qui migrat, qui non revertetur amplius, et videbit (*hoc est*, ut videat) terram nativitatis suæ.

They explain this verse of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah, but I consider it rather a general declaration, for the Prophet wished briefly to shew how miserable would be the condition of the people, as it would be better and more desirable at once to die than to protract life in continual languor. Of the kings he will afterwards speak, but reason compels us to extend these words to the whole people.

When a people flee away, being not able to resist their enemies, they may look for a restoration. In that case all dread death more than exile and all other calamities which are endured in this life, for they who remain alive may somehow emerge from their ills and troubles, or at least they may have them alleviated; but death cuts off all hopes. But the Prophet says here that death would be better than exile; and why? Because it would have been better at once to die than to protract a life of misery, weariness, and reproach, and at last to be destroyed. By saying, then, *Weep ye not for the dead, nor bewail him,*[1] it is the same as though he had said, "If the destruction of this city be lamented, much more ought they to be lamented who shall remain alive than those who shall die, for death will be as it were a rest, it will be a harbour to end all evils; but life will be nothing else than a continual succession of miseries." We hence conclude that this ought not to be confined to the two kings, but viewed as declared generally of the whole people.[2]

[1] Literally, "nor nod for him." They were not to shake the head for him in sign of sorrow. There was a shaking of the head in scorn or derision as well as in condolence or sympathy. See chap. xviii. 16.—*Ed.*

[2] The Versions and the *Targum* seem to favour this view of *Calvin*, as

It follows, *For he shall return no more, that he may see the land of his nativity.* He shews that exile would be a sort of infection that would gradually consume the miserable Jews. Thus death would have been far better for them than to be in this manner long tormented and to have no relaxation. He then takes away the hope of a return, that he might shew that their exile would be as it were a dying languor, corroding them as a worm, so that to die a hundred times would have been more desirable than to remain in such a hard and miserable bondage. It now follows:

11. For thus saith the Lord touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place, He shall not return thither any more:

12. But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

11. Quia sic dicit Jehova ad Sallum (*vel*, super Sallum) filium Josiæ, regis Jehudah, qui regnat pro Josia patre suo, quando (אשׁר, *est quidem relativum, sed non dubito quin sumatur hic pro adverbio temporis; et ideo obscurant sensum interpretes, dum vertunt, qui egressus est, et coguntur deinde mutare sensum verbi; sed hoc optime fluit et sæpe accipitur pro* quando) egressus fuerit ex hoc loco, non revertetur amplius:

12. Quoniam in loco ad quem transtulerint ipsum, illic morietur, et terram hanc non videbit amplius.

What he had before said generally he now applies distinctly and especially to the person of the king, that the people in general might know that they could not escape that punishment from which even the king would not be exempt. They, no doubt, when they heard that such a hard and bitter lot would happen to a king, regarded it as a thing

they render the participle, "going away," in the present tense, as in our version. The verse, then, is as follows,—

Weep ye not for the dead, nor bewail him;
Weep, weep for him who goeth away;
For he will not return any more,
And see the land of his nativity.

The repetition of the verb "weep" is emphatical. Our version, "weep sore," is the *Arab.* The *Sept.* and the *Targ.* take it as an instance of what often occurs in Hebrew, a participle joined to a verb to enhance its force; but it is not so here, the two verbs are in the imperative mood. But it may be that there is here, as many think, a direct allusion to Josiah, who was dead, and was much lamented, and to Shallum, who was taken captive and carried into Egypt, where he died. In that case we ought to render the second line thus,—

Weep, weep for him who has gone away.

The Hebrew participle may often be rendered in the past tense; and so it is rendered here by *Gataker*, *Venema*, and *Blayney*.

incredible; but Jeremiah intended to shew in his person that what we have just seen was nigh them all, that is, that it would be better for them at once to die than to pine away for a long time.

We must at the same time notice, that what these two verses contain respecting the king is not said as though it applied to him alone, but rather that every one might apply it to himself what the Prophet said of the king alone.

As to the word Shallum, it is thought that Jehoiakim was so called, who had also the name of Jeconiah, and who had of his own accord given up the kingdom and died in exile. But as he is called the son of Josiah, a doubt has arisen. But if we duly consider what sacred history relates, the probable conjecture is, that he was not his son but his grandson, for the chosen successor of his father was Jehoiakim, called also Eliakim. Yet Matthew calls him the son of Josiah, and that he was born to him together with his brethren. (Matt. i. 11.) But we know that it was a common thing with the Hebrews to call descendants sons, especially when the family of David was spoken of; that the order of succession might be preserved, those who next followed their predecessors were called sons. Thus, according to this custom, Eliakim might have been deemed his son, who was really his brother. As, then, he was the successor of Josiah, he is called his son.[1]

[1] Most commentators agree that Shallum was another name for Jehoahaz, who succeeded his father Josiah. See 2 Kings xxiii. 30; and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1. He reigned only three months, and was succeeded by his elder brother Jehoiakim. Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 2, with verse 5. The only difficulty arises from 1 Chron. iii. 15, where we have the sons of Josiah arranged in this order,— Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Shallum. Johanan no doubt died young, and he could not be Jehoahaz, for he is said to be the first-born; and Jehoahaz, as it appears from 2 Chron. xxxvi. 2 and 5, was younger than Jehoiakim, and older by many years than Zedekiah. The only solution of the difficulty seems to be that there is, as *Blayney*, *Horsley*, and others thought, a typographical mistake in 1 Chron. iii. 15, that Shallum ought to be *before* Zedekiah, instead of being after him. His two brothers had two names as well as Shallum. There is a mistake of the same kind (that of transcribers at an early period, as there are no different readings) in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, where Jehoiachin is said to have been eight years old when he began to reign, instead of eighteen, as we find it stated in 2 Kings xxiv. 8. And this age alone comports with

There is yet no doubt but that God shews here that a pious king would not be a patronizer either to his own son, or to his grandson, or to others; for hypocrites are wont to form a defence for themselves from the holiness of their fathers. And as king Josiah had faithfully served God, his sons thought that God was in a manner bound to themselves, as though all this had not proceeded from the mere bounty of God, that Josiah had been so sincerely religious. But hypocrites, as I have just said, seek ever to render God bound to them. Hence the Prophet checks this false confidence, and declares that though Josiah was approved of God, yet his memory would not be of such an account as to shield his posterity from punishment. God, indeed, promises in his Law to be merciful to the thousandth generation, even to them who love him, (Exod. xx. 6;) but the ungodly very absurdly lay hold on this, as though they held God bound to them; for they thus imagine that they can deprive him of his power, and judgment, and authority over the world. The meaning then is, that Shallum in vain promised safety to himself because he had descended from the holy king Josiah, who had been a patron of eminent piety, for this could not be the means of lessening his punishment, inasmuch as he had degenerated from his father, whom he ought to have imitated, knowing that he was approved by God. And this also was the reason for the repetition, for he not only calls him the son of Josiah, but also adds, that he *reigned instead of his* father Josiah. Though, then, he succeeded so pious a king, he yet became degenerated and departed from the example of his father.

the language of Jeremiah in this chapter, for he would not have denounced such a judgment on a child eight years of age.

As to Matt. i. 11, the true reading no doubt is, "And Josiah begat Jehoiakim, and Jehoiakim begat Jeconiah," &c., as found in some copies, though not of great authority.

Some, with *Calvin*, think Shallum to be Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, and not Shallum the son of Josiah. The objection to this is, that the Prophet here proceeds from Shallum to Jehoiakim, and then to his son Jeconiah. And from what he says of Jehoiakim, it appears that he delivered this prophecy in his reign, except we think, as some do, that the Prophet relates here in the reign of Zedekiah what he had previously prophesied. But the probability is, as *Blayney* and others think, that this prophecy was delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim. [Ed.]

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When he shall have gone forth from this place, he shall not return here any more.[1] As, then, the king was precluded from returning, what would become of the common people and the dregs of society? Could their condition be better? How then could the Jews dare flatter themselves when they perceived so dreadful an evidence of God's wrath in the king himself, on whom depended their safety? A confirmation follows, *For he shall die in the place to which they shall have led him away.* He intimates that he was to be by force carried away; he doubtless did not surrender himself until he saw that he was under the necessity of yielding. Then the Prophet in effect says that he would be a miserable exile, driven into banishment against his own will. It is then added, that he would *see no more the land of his nativity,* so that his lot would be nothing better than that of any one of the common people. It follows,—

13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that* useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.

13. Heus qui ædificat domum suam in non justitia, (*hoc est,* injuste,) et cœnacula sua in non judicio (*hoc est,* sine rectitudine et æquitate;) proximum suum servire facit gratis, et opus ejus non reddit ei (*vel,* quod ille operatus fuerit non reddit ei; *quidam enim volunt esse verbum, alii nomen, sed idem manebit sensus*).

The Prophet begins here to shew that it could not be otherwise but that the king's palace as well as Jerusalem must be destroyed, for their wickedness had arrived to the highest pitch; but he now, as it will appear presently, reprehends the father of Jeconiah.

He then says that the city was full of robberies, and especially the palace of the king. Yet I do not think that the Prophet speaks only of the king, but also of the courtiers and chief men. We must also bear in mind what I said yesterday, that the common people were not absolved while the king was condemned. But as dignity and honour among the people belonged both to the king and the princes, the Prophet exposes them publicly, that it might be made evi-

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dent how deplorable the state of things was throughout the whole community. We must at the same time add, that the chief among them were first summoned to judgment, not only because every one had privately offended, but because they had by their bad examples corrupted the whole body of the people; and also, because they had taken more liberty, as they feared nothing. We indeed know that the rich exercise tyranny, because they deem themselves exempt from all laws. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet here denounces, in a special manner, a curse on the king and the chief men.

He says, that they *built unjustly;* his words are, *with no justice* and with *no judgment,* by which he designates cruelty, frauds, and robberies; he, in short, includes under these words all kinds of iniquity. The way in which these things were done is stated; they wronged their neighbours, by demanding and extorting labours without rewarding them. Here, indeed, the Prophet only refers to one kind of injustice; but it may hence be easily concluded, how unjustly and wickedly they ruled who were then in authority; for they employed their neighbours, as though they were slaves, in building houses and palaces, for they denied them their wages. But nothing can be more cruel than to deprive the poor of the fruit of their labour, who from their labour derive their daily support. It is, indeed, commanded in the Law, that the wages of the labourer should not sleep with us, (Lev. xix. 13;) for that would be the same as to kill him.[1] There is also another indignity; when a robber kills

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Of his neighbour he makes a slave for no reason,
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The verb עבד when followed by ב, means to enslave, or to make a slave. See chap. xxv. 14. We hence see the force of the word חנם, gratuitously, for no reason, because the Jews might under certain circumstances be reduced to a state of slavery; but Jehoiakim did this when there was no cause. This was the "wrong judgment." And then he gave them no support, nothing for their work; this was the "injustice." He reduced

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a man, his object is the spoil; but he who extorts labour from a poor man, and sucks, so to speak, his blood, afterwards sends him away naked and needy; this is more atrocious than by violence to kill him. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. But as he continues the same subject, I shall defer any further remarks till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou continuest both by chastising us, and by kindly alluring us to thyself, to deal with us in such a way as to find out whether we are healable,—O grant, that we may not be hardened either against thy threatenings or thy promises, but follow in a teachable spirit what thou shewest is pleasing to thee, and make progress in holy living, and become daily more watchful and diligent, until we shall at length reach the goal which is set before us, and receive the reward of our faith in thy celestial kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Second.

In the last Lecture we began to explain the reproof given by the Prophet to King Jehoiakim for his cruelty and oppression; for in building his splendid palaces, he constrained the people to labour for nothing. This was the crime which the Prophet pointed out when he said, *Ho! he builds unjustly, and his chambers by iniquity;* literally, "not in judgment."

As Jehoiakim might have objected and said, that this was lawful for him, for kings think that the whole world has been created for their sake, the Prophet called his attention to the common rights of men, for all the Israelites were his relations; as though he had said, "Though thou excellest in dignity, yet thou art one of the race of Abraham, and taken from the midst of thy brethren; there is, therefore, no reason

them to slavery, and did not maintain them. The real import of the passage is completely lost in the loose renderin of the Versions; but the *Targ.* rightly expresses the meaning of the t rd line, "To slavery he reduces for no cause his neighbour."—*Ed.*

for thee to take so much liberty as though they were to be thy vassals." We hence see the design of the Prophet, when he condemned the cruelty of King Jehoiakim, who in building magnificent palaces treated the people arbitrarily and unjustly, and extorted more labour than what was right. It now follows,—

14. That saith, I will build me a wide house, and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and *it is* ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion!

14. Qui dicit, Ædificabo mihi domum amplam (mensuram, *ad verbum, subaudiunt quidam Interpretes,* magnarum; *sed illud frigidum est, simpliciter enim* domus mensurarum *tantundem valet ac* domus spatiosa,) et cœnacula dilatationum (*ad verbum, vel,* respirationum, *aut* perflationum, *nam* רוח *significat tam respirare quam dilatare; unde deducitur* רוח *quod significat spiritum et ventum,*) et perforat sibi fenestras, et tecta (*vel,* cooperta) est domus cedro et uncta minio.

Some render the last words, "and painted with red;" but vermilion is a kind of red. They, indeed, mention three kinds of red,—deep red, brownish, and the third mixed with various colours; but vermilion is a brighter colour. As to the main point there is no difficulty; the Prophet reproves the ambition and pride of King Jehoiakim, that he was not content with the moderation of his fathers, but indulged in extravagant display, and built for himself a palace as it were in the clouds, as though he did not wish to have a dwelling on the earth. Splendour in houses cannot in itself be condemned; but, as it can hardly be, nay, as it seldom happens, but that such insatiable ambition proceeds from pride, hence the Prophets vehemently denounced sumptuous houses; and they pronounced a curse on such displays, because they had a regard to the motive and the end. Such was the design of the Prophet in this passage.

He therefore thus introduces King Jehoiakim, *who says, I will build for myself a large house and chambers of respirations.* That he *said* this proved the foolish ambition with which Jehoiakim had been inebriated, so that he regarded as nothing whatever was splendid before in Jerusalem. There were palaces, we know, very sumptuous there; and we also know that the king of Judah lived in great splendour. For though the palaces of Solomon were not then standing in their original grandeur, yet what remained was abundantly

sufficient to satisfy a man who was not filled with pride. It hence appears that a fondness for excess prevailed in Jehoiakim, for he despised the royal palace, and whatever remained after the death of Solomon. For God, we know, had blessed with prosperity Hezekiah, and Josiah, and other kings; but they had continued within proper bounds. Since, then, such haughtiness had crept into the heart of Jehoiakim, it is evident, that he was filled with vain pride, nay, was drunk with folly. This was the reason why the Prophet severely reproved him for saying, "I will build for myself a large house and chambers of respirations," or of perflations.[1]

He then adds, *and he perforates for himself windows.*[2] It was a proof of luxury, when men began to indulge in superfluities. In old times the windows were small; for use only was regarded by frugal men; but afterwards a sort of madness possessed the minds of many, so that they sought to be suspended as it were in the air. And hence they began to have wider windows. The thing in itself, as I have said, is not what God condemns; but we must ever remember, as I have reminded you, that men never go to excesses in external things, except when their hearts are infected with pride, so that they do not regard what is useful, what is becoming, but are carried away by fondness for excess.

It is then added, *and it is covered with cedar*, that is, the house is covered with cedar boards. For in my judgment the Prophet means here the wainscotting, when he says that the house was covered with cedar; as though he had said, that King Jehoiakim esteemed the squared and polished stones as nothing, unless a covering was added of cedar boards to ornament the walls.[3] And for the same purpose

[1] The word is מרוחים, rendered "fanned—*πνευστὰ*," by the *Sept.*, and "spacious" by the other Versions and the *Targ.* The rendering may be "chambers of ventilations," meaning "airy chambers." *Parkhurst* considers it a Huphal participle, and renders it "airy." But *Blayney* objects to this, as it is in a different gender from "chambers;" but it may be viewed as in construction; for in Hebrew two nouns are often used for a noun and a participle, or an adjective.—*Ed.*

[2] The *Vulg.*, the *Syr.*, and *Targ.*, read, "And he opens for himself windows." The verb is קרע, to rend, to divide, and also to distend, to enlarge, to dilate. See chap. iv. 30. The line may be rendered,—

And he makes large his windows.—*Ed.*

[3] *Calvin* is quite right in applying the latter part to the house generally,

was the *painting with vermilion;* for justly might paintings be deemed excessive superfluities. As, then, it was a part of luxury to adorn the walls with various paintings, as though men wished to change the simple nature of things, the Prophet here is indignant against King Jehoiakim. Nor is it to be doubted, but that God had regard also to the circumstances of the times; for God had already warned him and all the Jews respecting their future calamities. This, then, was in a manner to treat with mockery the threatenings of God. And we know how intolerable was this regarded by him; for he thus declares by Isaiah, "Live do I, never shall this iniquity be blotted out," (Is. xxii. 14;) for when he had exhorted them to put on sackcloth and ashes, they said, "Let us eat and drink, to-morrow we shall die." Similar, then, was the perverseness of King Jehoiakim; for he ought to have seen the coming calamity which was set as it were before his eyes; but he, like one infatuated, increased the royal splendour, so that the wealth of David and of Solomon

and not to the chambers, as it is done by the *Sept.* and the *Arab.;* and guided by them, *Houbigant* proposed emendations of the Text. The arrangement of the verse is according to the common practice of the Prophets,—

14. Who says, "I will build me a spacious house,
And airy upper apartments:"
And he makes large his windows;
And covered it is with cedar,
And painted with vermilion.

There are two things mentioned,—house and apartments. Of the latter he speaks first, as it is usually the case, that he made large windows in them; and then he speaks of the house in general, that it was covered (not ceiled) with cedar, as the Temple was, (1 Kings vi. 15,) and painted with vermilion. Here we see an instance how emendations have been proposed through ignorance as to the Hebrew style. The *Syriac* version makes the sense more distinct, though it be not literal, and is as follows,—

Who says, "I will build me large houses,
And spacious chambers:"
For these he opens windows;
Those he covers with cedars,
And adorns with paintings.

"Vermilion," שׁשׁר, rendered, "μίλτῳ—ochre," or ruddle, by the *Sept.;* "sinopide—a red stone," by the *Vulg.* and *Targ.* *Parkhurst* quotes *Pliny,* who says that μίλτος was found in silver mines, and was a sort of reddish sand, and used as a paint. Something of this kind was what is here mentioned, though it is not known now specifically what it was, nor is it of much consequence. It occurs only here, and in Ezek. xxiii. 14.—*Ed.*

appeared as nothing compared with what he had expended. It now follows,—

15. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest *thyself* in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, *and* then *it was* well with him?

15. An regnabis, quia tu permisces se in cedro? (*hoc est*, quia te involvis cedro:) pater tuus annon comedit et bibit et fecit (*hoc est*, cum faceret) judicium et justitiam? tunc bene fuit ei.

The Prophet here derides the foolish confidence of King Jehoiakim, because he set up empty things against his enemies instead of strong defences. Kings are wont to indulge themselves when there is quietness and security; that is, when they fear nothing; when no danger appears, they then give way to their own gratifications; and this is commonly the case with all; for we see that kings especially indulge in excesses, when there is no war, when no one gives them trouble, and no one threatens them; but Jehoiakim, had he the least particle of wisdom, might have known that he had many dangers to dread. Now, when he applied all his thoughts to the painting of his walls, and to the splendour of his palace, to its wainscotting and other trifles, must he not have been insane, and not of a sound mind?

It is this madness that Jeremiah now condemns when he says, *Shalt thou reign, because thou surroundest thyself with cedar boards?*[1] that is, "Can this confirm thy kingdom to thee? or, shalt thou be more happy on this account, because thou art surrounded by cedars?" The meaning of the Prophet may be more fully learnt from the remaining part of

[1] The general sense is given, but not a literal rendering. The last verb is variously rendered; "because thou betakest thyself to cedar," is the *Vulg.*; "wilt thou delight thyself in cedars?" the *Syr.*; the *Targ.* is a loose paraphrase, and the *Sept.* and *Arab.* wholly depart from our present text, "because thou art stimulated by Ahaz thy father." Then what follows is widely different, but wholly inconsistent with the original. The verb is the Hithpael of חָרָה, to burn, to be hot; and it means to be hot or warm with anger, exertion, grief, or delight. In the second sense it is used in chap. xii. 5; but here in the last sense, "because thou art inflamed with cedar," or greatly delightest thyself in cedar; and this meaning is countenanced both by the *Vulg.* and *Syr.* *Blayney* takes the third sense—"hot with grief," and gives this version, which is approved by *Horsley*, though its meaning is not very evident,—

Shalt thou reign because thou frettest thyself in cedar?

Venema is more to the point,—

Shalt thou reign, because thou art in great heat for cedar?—*Ed.*

the verse; for it immediately follows, *Thy father, did he not eat and drink when he did judgment and justice?*

Some so understand the passage, as though the Prophet meant to obviate an objection; for Jehoiakim might have referred to the example of his father Josiah, who had not been a sordid man, but had displayed some royal dignity and grandeur through the whole course of his life. Some interpreters, then, think that the Prophet answers here what Jehoiakim might have objected: "What! did not my father also make a royal display?" Thus they explain the words, as though the Prophet made at first a concession, but that by adding a correction, he shewed that the excuse of Jehoiakim was frivolous: "I allow that thy father was royally adorned, but he executed judgment and justice; why dost thou not imitate thy father in his virtues? God forgave what was superfluous or excessive, for through his great indulgence he bears with many things in kings; but thou art far different from thy father, for thou extortest labour from thy poor subjects, and buildest thy palaces by means of extortion and plunder. There is, therefore, no reason for thee to seek for thyself a covering from thy father, for thou art wholly fallen away from his integrity."

Others elicit an entirely different meaning,—that Josiah had prolonged his life, and conciliated the favour of God by ruling with justice. So, then, they connect the words thus: "Did not thy father eat and drink," that is, "did he not live happily, because God had blessed him? Inquire the cause, and you will find it to be this—he faithfully discharged his duties, for he executed judgment and justice. As, then, thou seest that the equity and moderation which thy father had practised, was the cause of his happy life, why dost not thou also imitate him?"

But the Prophet seems to me to mean simply this, "Thy father doubtless lived happily, and nothing was wanting to him while he executed judgment and justice." For thus appears better the contrast between the tyranny of Jehoiakim, and the uprightness of his father Josiah; as though he had said, "Thou deemest now thy state better than that of thy father, because thou surpassest him in luxury and splendour.

As then thou exultest in vain things, thou seemest to thyself to be happier than thy father: but thy father was contented with his lot; nay, if his condition be duly regarded, God honoured him with every abundance and variety of blessings; *he did eat and drink.*"

By *eating* and *drinking* I understand nothing else, but that he lived cheerfully, enjoyed prosperity, spent a peaceable life. *Thy father*, he says, *did eat and drink;* that is, he had nothing to desire, and his condition was an evidence of God's favour when he *executed judgment and justice.* And not unsuitable to this view is what follows, *Then it was well with him.*[1]

We hence see that the foolish ambition of Jehoiakim is here laughed to scorn; for he seemed not to think himself a king unless he conducted himself like a madman. Such is the case with kings at this day; they are ashamed to appear humane, and devise means only to exercise tyranny; and they also contrive how they may depart as far as possible from the common usage and practice of men. As then kings are so ingenious in their own follies, which seem to be like veils, lest anything humane should be perceived in them, the Prophet justly inveighs here against Jehoiakim; "*It was well,*" he says, "with thy father; and yet he acted kindly and courteously towards his people; nor had he such haughtiness as to despise the common habits of men. Since then he was happy, if thou regardest what belongs to real happiness, why dost thou please thyself so much? What hast thou that is better or more excellent than what he had!"

We now perceive what the object of the Prophet was to

[1] The whole verse would read better thus,—

15. Shalt thou reign, because thou art enamoured with cedar?
Thy father—did he not eat and drink?
When he administered judgment and justice,
Then it was well with him.

To eat and to drink, as *Calvin* observes, means a happy life; his father enjoyed life, though he took no delight in cedars; but his happiness arose from governing justly his people. The *Syr.* connects the two last lines as above,—

He executed judgment and justice,
I therefore did him good.—*Ed.*

shew, that it is the only true glory and the chief honour of kings, when they discharge their duties, and that the image of God shines forth in them, when they execute judgment and justice; and that when they ambitiously seek through a blind zeal to be the slaves of pride, it is a vain attempt, and contributes nothing towards that happy life which they foolishly imagine. To the same purpose he adds,—

16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then *it was* well *with him: was* not this to know me? saith the Lord.

16. Judicium judicavit pauperis et egeni, tunc bene; an non cognoscere me, inquit Jehova?

He more fully expresses what he had said, that Josiah lived usefully, and was honoured and esteemed, for royal majesty shone forth in him. He then repeats in other words what he had said, but he did this for the sake of explanation.[1]

He undertook, he says, *the cause*, or the quarrel, *of the poor and needy*. There is here a part stated for the whole; for when any one deals kindly with the poor, he may yet plunder the wealth of the rich, which cannot be deemed right; but as the case most commonly is, that those who rule neglect the poor and helpless, the Prophet includes under one thing the whole duty of rulers, and says that King Josiah was upright, just, and equitable, that he not only abstained from wrongs, but also assisted the innocent whom he saw oppressed, and of his own accord interposed to prevent any to molest them. He then under one thing comprehends everything that belongs to the office of a just and upright judge. For

[1] *Venema* considers that there is here no repetition, but takes this verse as addressed to Jehoiakim, and gives this version,—

By judging judge the afflicted and poor,
Then *it will be* well *with thee:*
Is not this the knowledge of me, saith Jehovah?

But the words will not admit of this rendering. The verb is in the past tense, followed by a noun derived from the same verb, a thing not unusual in Hebrew. Literally the verse is,—

He defended the defence (the cause) of the needy and poor,
Then well *it was with him:*
Was not that to know me, saith Jehovah?

The pronoun זֹה, is not *this*, but *that*, when used as a demonstrative pronoun. See Gen. ii. 19. We may indeed render the last line thus,—

Was not that the knowledge of me, saith Jehovah?

That is, Was it not the fruit or the effect of that knowledge?—*Ed.*

it is the first thing for judges to abstain from all rapacity and violence; and the second thing is to extend a hand to the poor, and to bring them aid, whenever they see them exposed to the wrongs of others. *He* then *judged the judgment*, or undertook the cause, *of the poor and needy;* and it is added, *Then well;* that is, as I have explained, "This was the happiness of thy father Josiah, so that he was not despised by the people, nor had he any desire for anything more."

It then follows, *Was not this to know me, saith Jehovah?*[1] The Prophet shews again whence proceeded the liberty which King Jehoiakim took in luxury and superfluous display, as well as in plunder, cruelty, and oppression, even because he had cast away every care and concern for religion; for where a real knowledge of God exists, men must necessarily have regard to uprightness and moderation. He then who thus acts cruelly towards his neighbours, clearly shews that every thought of religion and every care for it is rooted out of his heart. In short, the Prophet means that Jehoiakim was not only unjust towards men, but was also guilty of impiety; for except he had become a profane despiser of God, he would not have thus unjustly oppressed his neighbours.

But this passage deserves to be noticed, as it shews that piety leads men to all the duties of love. Where God then is known, kindness to man also appears. So also on the other hand we may conclude, that all regard for God is extinguished, and all fear of him is abolished, when men wilfully do wrong to one another, and when they seek to oppress or defraud one another. There is therefore no doubt but that gross impiety will be found where the offices of love are neglected. For when Jeremiah commended the piety of Josiah on this account, because he executed judgment and justice, he doubtless condemned Jehoiakim, as though he had said, that he was an abandoned and irreclaimable apostate; for had he

[1] The *Vulg.* is, "Was it not so, because he knew me, saith Jehovah?" the *Syr.*, "He who doeth such things knoweth me, saith the Lord;" and the *Targ.*, "Is not that the knowledge which I desire, saith the Lord?" The *Vulg.* is the most correct. "They are said to know God," says Grotius, "who shew by their deeds that they know what pleases Him."—*Ed.*

retained a spark of religion, he would have acted more justly and humanely towards his people. It now follows,—

17. But thine eyes and thine heart *are* not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do *it*.

17. Quia non oculus tuus et cor tuum nisi ad cupiditatem tuam, et ad sanguinem innoxium fundendum, et ad rapacitatem, et ad oppressionem, ad faciendum (*hoc est*, ut exequaris.)

Here the Prophet expresses more clearly how much Jehoiakim differed from Josiah his father. He indeed shews that he was wholly unlike him, because Josiah had endeavoured to observe what was equitable, while he set all his thoughts on fraud, plunder, and cruelty; for by the *eye* and the *heart* he means all the faculties of his soul and body. One of the main senses of the body, as it is well known, is the sight. Hence the Prophet includes here whatever is external and internal in men, when he says, *thine eye*, that is, all thy bodily senses are set on covetousness, and also *thine heart*, that is, all thy thoughts, feelings, designs, meditations, and purposes are employed in the same way. He intimates, in short, that Jehoiakim was corrupt both in body and mind, so that having cast aside every fear of God, he abandoned himself to avarice as well as to plunder and all acts of oppression. *Thine eye*, he says, *and thy heart is not, except on covetousness.*

The verb בצע, *betso*, means to covet; hence the noun signifies not only avarice, but also any sinful lust. He adds cruelty, for it cannot be but that all are bloody who give loose reins to their lusts. He mentions in the third place *rapacity*, or violent seizure; for עשק, *oshek*, means to take by force what belongs to another; hence the noun signifies rapacity. What follows in the last place is *oppression*, or disquietude. As רוץ, *ruts*, means to run, Jerome renders it "the course of thy work," as though ל, *lamed*, prefixed to עשות, *oshut*, were not one of the serviles, ם, ל, כ, ב, *beth*, *caph*, *lamed*, *mem*, but this cannot be admitted. The clear meaning of the Prophet indeed is, that Jehoiakim was not only intent on taking possession on what belonged to others, but that he also oppressed and distressed all he could. It is lastly added, *to do;* the verb to do is to be applied to what

has gone before, that Jehoiakim employed all his thoughts, and was wholly engaged in evil deeds, that he not only contrived acts of cruelty and of avariciousness in his mind, but also carried fully into execution what he had contrived.[1] It follows,—

18. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!

19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

18. Propterea sic dicit Jehova ad Joakim (*vel*, de, ל. *capitur pro de, ergo* de Joakim) filio Josiæ regis Jehudah, Non lugebunt eum, Heus frater mi! et heus soror! non lugebunt eum, Heus domine! heus gloria ejus!

19. Sepultura asini sepelietur, ad trahendum, et projiciendum ad extra ad portas (*ad verbum hoc est*, longe extra portas) Jerosolymæ.

The Prophet having inveighed against Jehoiakim, now shews what kind of punishment from God awaited him; he would have otherwise despised the Prophet's reproof; but when he heard that a reward was prepared for him, he must have been roused. Inasmuch then as he was seized with a foolish and even a sottish lust for glory, so that he cast aside every care for uprightness, the Prophet declares that disgrace was prepared for him; and hence he compares him after his death to an ass.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah to King Jehoiakim, or concerning King Jehoiakim,[2] *the son of Josiah the king*, &c. He is not called the son of Josiah for honour's sake, but for the purpose of touching him to the quick, because he had degenerated from the piety of his father. But as he hoped that the religion of Josiah would be to him a sort of covering, the Prophet derides and checks this vain confidence. "Thou gloriest in being the son of King Josiah, but thy

[1] The most literal version of this verse is the following,—

For *on* nothing are thine eyes and thine heart,
Except on thy gain,
And on innocent blood, that it may be shed,
And on oppression and on violence,
That they may be done.

"That it may be shed," is literally, "for being shed," it is a passive participle; and such is the case as to the last verb.—*Ed.*

[2] It is "to" in the *Sept.* and *Vulg.*, and "concerning" in the *Syr.*, *Arab.*, and *Targ.* The latter is most adopted by commentators.—*Ed.*

holy father will avail thee nothing, for thou seemest avowedly to shew that thou art wholly different from him. Though then thou art descended from Josiah, and though God has raised thee to the royal throne, yet there is no reason for thee to be confident as to thy safety; for these benefits of God will not preserve thee from that ignominious treatment which thou deservest."

He says first, *They shall not bewail him, Ah my brother! Ah sister!* The Prophet mentions by way of imitation the words of the mourners. That people, we know, were very vehement in expressing their sorrow. And this ought to be borne in mind, because some being persuaded that nothing is related by the Prophets but what ought to be taken as an example, do therefore think that these modes of lamentation were approved by God. But we have before seen what the Prophet said in verse 4, "Enter through these gates shall the kings of Judah and their princes in chariots," &c.; yet we know that kings had been forbidden to make such ostentations; but God did not scrupulously refer to what was lawful or right in speaking of royal splendour; so also when he spoke of funeral rites. We ought not then to make a law of what the Prophet says, as though it were right and proper to bewail the dead with howling. There is indeed no doubt, but these excesses which the Prophet mentions were not only foolish, but also wholly condemnable; for we often vie with one another in our lamentations; and when men intemperately express their grief in funerals, they excite themselves into a sort of madness in crying and bewailing, and then when they compose themselves and simulate grief, they act a part as in a [illegible] here speaks only accordin[illegible] theatre. But the Prophet when he says, "[illegible]g to the common practice of the age, he states [illegible]They shall not bewail him," &c.; that is, when a [illegible]what was usually done, when one embraced another, said, "[illegible]ister said, "Ah, my brother!" and when a brother O king, Ah, my sister!" or, when the people said, "Ah, lord, thy cro[illegible] where is thy glory! where is thy honour! where foolish [illegible]wn! where thy sceptre! where thy throne!" Very tions h[illegible]then were the lamentations which the Prophet men[illegible]ere. But as I have already said, it is enough for us

As then thou exultest in vain things, thou seemest to thyself to be happier than thy father: but thy father was contented with his lot; nay, if his condition be duly regarded, God honoured him with every abundance and variety of blessings; *he did eat and drink.*"

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But at the same time he accommodates what he says to their intentions; for there is no doubt but that they ever cast their eyes either on Egypt or on Assyria for any aid they might want. Hence he says, *Ascend* Mount *Lebanon, and cry*, and then *cry* on Mount *Bashan*, and *cry all around*, (for by *sides* he means all parts;) but thou shalt gain nothing, he says, *for consumed are all thy lovers.*[1] We learn from the end of the verse that the Prophet said, *Ascend, and cry*, by way of derision. By *lovers* he means the Egyptians and the Assyrians, and other neighbouring nations; for the Jews, when they feared any danger, were wont to flee to their neighbours, and God was in the meantime neglected by them; and for this reason they were called lovers. God had espoused the people as his own, and hence he often called them his wife, and he speaks here in the feminine gender; and thus the people are compared to a wife, and God assumes the character of a husband. When, there-

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And this is to be especially noticed, for we hence conclude how great his perverseness was in despising the threatenings of God, since the Prophet could not otherwise storm the mind of the king, and terrify the people, than by exaggerating the indignity that was to happen to him. For if there had been any teachable spirit in the king and the people, the Prophet would have been content with making a simple statement, "Jehoiakim shall not be buried;" that is, God will punish him even when dead; the curse of God will not only be upon him while living, but he will also take vengeance on him after his death. He was not content with this kind of statement; but *he shall be buried*, he says, as an ass, and *shall be cast far off;* and further still, his carcass shall be *drawn* or dragged; so that it was to be an eternal mark of infamy and disgrace.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as it has pleased thee to perpetuate the memory of the dreadful vengeance which thou hast executed on the descendants of David, so that we may learn by their evils carefully to walk before thee,—O grant, that the forgetfulness of this example may never possess us, but that we may assiduously meditate on what is set before us, in order that we may thus endeavour to advance and promote the glory of thy name through the whole course of our life, so that we may at length be made partakers of thy celestial glory, which thou hast prepared for us, and which thine only-begotten Son has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Third.

20. Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.

20. Ascende in Libanum, et clama, et in Basan ede vocem tuam, et clama a lateribus, quia contriti sunt omnes amatores tui.

JEREMIAH triumphs over the Jews, and derides their presumption in thinking that they would be safe, though God

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to know, that he refers to these rites, then commonly practised, without expressing his approbation of them.

They shall not, he says, *bewail* King Jehoiakim; they shall not say at his funeral, *Ah, my brother! Ah, sister! Ah, lord! Ah, his glory!*[1] There shall be no such thing; and why? because *he shall be buried with the burial of an ass.* We have before said, that it was justly deemed one of God's curses when a carcass was cast away unburied; for God would have burial a proof to distinguish us from brute animals even after death, as we in life excel them, and as our condition is much nobler than that of the brute creation. Burial is also a pledge as it were of immortality; for when man's body is laid hid in the earth, it is, as it were, a mirror of a future life. Since then burial is an evidence of God's grace and favour towards mankind, it is on the other hand a sign of a curse, when burial is denied.

But it has been elsewhere said, that temporal punishments ought not always to be viewed alike; for God has suffered sometimes his faithful servants to lie unburied, according to what we read in Psalm lxxix. 2, 3, that their bodies were cast forth in the fields, that they were exposed to be eaten by the beasts of the earth and by the birds of heaven. Those spoken of were the true and sincere worshippers of God. But we know that the good and the bad have temporal punishments in common; and this is true as to famine and

[1] The original is not "his," but "her glory." The lamentation is such as was used for kings, when there was also a condolence expressed for the queens. Ah, my brother! and, Ah, lord! was a lamentation for the king when dead, (chap. xxxiv. 5;) and, Ah, sister! and, Ah, her glory! was sympathy for the surviving queen. Her glory had departed with her husband. This is *Blayney's* view

The Versions and the *Targum* are all [illegible] different, and not one of them renders the original correctly.

The verse may be thus rendered,—

18. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of Jehoiakim,
The son of Josiah, the king of Judah,—
They shall not lament for him—
"Ah, my brother! and, Ah, sister!"
They shall not lament for him—
"Ah, Lord! and, Ah, her glory!"

To render the ו disjunctively "or," as in our version, seems not [illegible] suitable. The lamentation and the condolence are to be connected togeth[illegible]er. The "Ah" might be rendered "Alas;" and so it is in many pla[illegible]es. See 1 Kings xiii. 30.—*Ed.*

nakedness, pestilence and war. The destruction of the city Jerusalem was a just punishment on the wicked; and yet Daniel and Jeremiah were driven into exile together with the wicked, and suffered great hardships; and in short, they were so mixed with the ungodly, that their external condition was in nothing different. So, then, the state of things in the world is often in such disorder that we cannot distinguish between the good and the bad by outward circumstances. But still it is right ever to hold this truth, that when burial is denied to a man, it is a sign of God's curse.

Hence, the Prophet says now, *He shall be buried with the burial of an ass.* He mentions the ass [illegible] animal; he might have named a horse [illegible] ass is a meaner and more [illegible] same thing as though he had said [illegible] away with the dogs." This [illegible] wounded not only the mind [illegible] that of the whole people; [illegible] all highly regarded the family [illegible] kingdom sacred, as it was [illegible] tection of God. But the [illegible] what was afterwards [illegible] was buried with the [illegible] far beyond the gates of [illegible] plifies the disgrace [illegible] branded, for he might have [illegible] he expresses what [illegible] *Drawn out* he says [illegible] shall not only be [illegible] lest his [illegible] worthy not only of [illegible]

[1] The [illegible]

And this is to be especially noticed, for we hence conclude how great his perverseness was in despising the threatenings of God, since the Prophet could not otherwise storm the mind of the king, and terrify the people, than by exaggerating the indignity that was to happen to him. For if there had been any teachable spirit in the king and the people, the Prophet would have been content with making a simple statement, "Jehoiakim shall not be buried;" that is, God will punish him even when dead; the curse of God will not only be upon him while living, but he will also take vengeance on him after his death. He was not content with this kind of statement; but *he shall be buried*, he says, as an ass, and *shall be cast far off;* and further still, his carcass shall be *drawn* or dragged; so that it was to be an eternal mark of infamy and disgrace.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as it has pleased thee to perpetuate the memory of the dreadful vengeance which thou hast executed on the descendants of David, so that we may learn by their evils carefully to walk before thee,—O grant, that the forgetfulness of this example may never possess us, but that we may assiduously meditate on what is set before us, in order that we may thus endeavour to advance and promote the glory of thy name through the whole course of our life, so that we may at length be made partakers of thy celestial glory, which thou hast prepared for us, and which thine only-begotten Son has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Third.

20. Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.

20. Ascende in Libanum, et clama, et in Basan ede vocem tuam, et clama a lateribus, quia contriti sunt omnes amatores tui.

JEREMIAH triumphs over the Jews, and derides their presumption in thinking that they would be safe, though God

kim slept with his fathers;" but this only means that he died, or that he died a natural death and was not killed; for we find this phrase used, when burial is afterwards mentioned. See 2 Chron. xii. 16; xvi. 13, 14.—*Ed.*

was against them. He then shews that they were deceived in promising to themselves impunity; but he bids them to *ascend Mount Lebanon*, and to *cry aloud on Mount Bashan*, that they might know that there would be no aid for them when God's judgment came. But the whole verse is ironical; for they would in vain cry and howl. Indeed, the Prophet thus treated them, because he saw that they were wholly irreclaimable. They were not worthy then that he should give them counsel, or faithfully warn them. He was therefore under the necessity ironically to deride their madness in promising safety to themselves, while they were continuing to provoke God's vengeance against themselves.

But at the same time he accommodates what he says to their intentions; for there is no doubt but that they ever cast their eyes either on Egypt or on Assyria for any aid they might want. Hence he says, *Ascend* Mount *Lebanon, and cry*, and then *cry* on Mount *Bashan*, and *cry all around*, (for by *sides* he means all parts;) but thou shalt gain nothing, he says, *for consumed are all thy lovers*.[1] We learn from the end of the verse that the Prophet said, *Ascend, and cry*, by way of derision. By *lovers* he means the Egyptians and the Assyrians, and other neighbouring nations; for the Jews, when they feared any danger, were wont to flee to their neighbours, and God was in the meantime neglected by them; and for this reason they were called lovers. God had espoused the people as his own, and hence he often called them his wife, and he speaks here in the feminine gender; and thus the people are compared to a wife, and God assumes the character of a husband. When, there-

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fore, the people, according to their self-will and humour, wandered here and there, this levity was called adultery; for the simplicity of faith is our spiritual chastity; for as a wife who regards her husband alone, keeps conjugal fidelity and chaste conduct, so when we continue to cleave to God alone, we are, in a spiritual sense, chaste as he requires us to be; but when we seek our safety from this and that quarter, we violate the fidelity which we owe to God. As soon, then, as we cast our thoughts here and there, it is to act like a woman who seeks vagrant and unlawful connections.

We now see the reason why the Prophet compares the Egyptians and Assyrians to lovers, for he intimates that the people of Israel did in this manner commit adultery, as it has been stated in other places. It follows,—

21. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; *but* thou saidst, I will not hear: this *hath been* thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.

21. Loquutus sum tecum in pace tua (*vel*, quiete, *vel*, fœlicitate tua,) dixisti, Non audiam; hæc via tua (*id est*, ratio, *vel*, consuetudo) a pueritia tua, quod non audieris vocem meam.

Here God shews that the people were worthy of the reward he had mentioned, even to mourn and to seek aid on every side without finding any. It, indeed, often happens that the excessive severity of a husband alienates his wife from his society; and when a husband, through want of thought, attends to other things and neglects his domestic affairs, and thus his wife goes astray; or when he connives at things when he sees his wife exposed to dangerous allurements and flatteries, the fault is in part to be ascribed to him. But God shews here that he had performed the duties of a good and faithful husband, and also that it was not his fault that the people did not perform their part.

I spoke to thee, he says; that is, thou canst not say that thou hast gone astray through ignorance; for they who are proved guilty are wont to flee to this kind of excuse,—"I did not think; had I been warned, I would have attended to good advice; but on slippery ground it is easy to fall, especially when no one stretches forth his hand to give any help." But God takes away here every pretext of this kind, and says, that he had *spoken;* as though he had said, "I warned thee in time; thou hast not then sinned through

ignorance or want of thought." In short, God [illegible] here the perverseness of the people, that they [illegible] wilfully abandoned themselves to every kind of [illegible] Now this passage deserves special [illegible] is a twofold crime, when God in [illegible] calls us to the right way, and we refuse [illegible] wickedness is inexcusable when we suffer [illegible] be corrected by him.

I spoke to thee, he adds, in thy tranquillity. [illegible] cumstance also their crime is aggravated [illegible] by his Prophets made known to his people what [illegible] but had also, by his blessing, conciliated them [illegible] For when a husband counsels his wife and [illegible] time austere or peevish, his wife will disregard [illegible] may hear, for her mind will be [illegible] but when a husband treats his wife [illegible] his benevolence the love he entertains [illegible] same time shews prudence in [illegible] must necessarily be of a very bad [illegible] moved by such advice, kindness, and [illegible] part of her husband. Now, God shews [illegible] sent Prophets in order to keep his people [illegible] discharge of their duties, and that he [illegible] and bountiful to them, that thereby they [illegible] drawn to obey him. Therefore, by the word [illegible] the Prophet sets forth God's kindness and bounty towards his people.[1]

It is, indeed, true what Moses says, that men are like mettlesome and wanton horses when they become fat. (Deut. xxxii. 15.) So fatness and tranquillity have such effect as to render us more refractory. Yet this cannot avail for an excuse when God kindly invites us and connects with his doctrine kind and paternal benevolence, and confirms it by the effects when we are teachable and yield him willing

[1] The word for tranquillity is in the plural number, "tranquillities," meaning tranquil, or quiet times or seasons. It is rendered "fall," very unaccountably, by the *Sept.*; "abundance," by the *Vulg.*; "affluence," by the *Syr.*; "when thou didst sit tranquil," by the *Targ.* But the word clearly means a tranquil, quiet, or peaceable state. *Blayney* rightly renders the expression, "in the times of thy tranquillity."—*Ed.*

obedience. Thus the Prophet closed the mouths of the Jews, for they would have sought probably to make this objection,—that vengeance was too vehemently denounced on them, and that God suddenly assailed them; but he shews that when in tranquillity and prosperity they might have acknowledged God's paternal kindness, they had yet been rebellious and had abused the indulgence of God.

I spoke to thee, he says, in thy tranquillity, *and thou didst say, I will not hear.* It is not, indeed, probable that the Jews had spoken so insolently as to say openly and in such plain words, that they would not be obedient; but the Prophet regards their life and not their words. Though, then, the Jews did not express these words,—that they would not obey God; yet such language might have been clearly inferred from their conduct, for they were so perverse as not to render obedience to God and to his counsels.

He adds, in the third place, that it had been the *custom* of the people *from their childhood not to hear the voice* of God. It is the height of impiety when we are not only refractory for one day or a short time, but when we pursue wickedness continually. God in the meantime intimates that he had from the beginning been solicitous for the safety of his people, but in vain. It sometimes happens that he who has become hardened in his vices, begins to be taught after the thirtieth or fortieth year, but he is not very pliable; for men become hard by long usage; we see that old men are less teachable than the young; and why? because age in a manner makes them sturdy, so that they cannot bear to be turned and ruled. But God shews here, that such was the wickedness of his people, that they had been rebellious from their childhood; as though he had said, "Thou canst not make this excuse, that thou hast been for a long time without a teacher, that thou hast been without any wisdom and understanding, and that on this account thou hast become hardened in evils; no, because I have found thee wholly unteachable from thy very childhood; it was *thy custom*, or manner, *not to hear my voice*," or, "This has been thy custom, that thou didst not hear my voice;" literally, "because thou didst not hear my voice;" but it ought to be rendered as

above, for כִּי, *ki*, is not here a connective, but an expletive or an exegetical particle.[1] It follows,—

22. The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity; surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

22. Omnes pastores tuos depascet ventus, et amatores tui in exilium migrabunt; certe tunc pudefies et erubesces ab omni malitia tua (*hoc est*, propter cunctam malitiam tuam.)

As the main fault was in the chief men, therefore God shews, that there would be no defence found in their prudence and wealth, when things came to an extremity: and it was a usual thing for the common people, when reproved, to refer to their rulers as their shield: nor is there a doubt but that the Jews made this objection to God's Prophets,—"What do you mean? that God has suffered us to be unhappily governed by bad princes? then he has exposed us as a prey to wolves: now if he punishes us, it seems an unjust thing for us to suffer for the fault of others." At the same time, they who thus spoke were secure and despised God, because they thought that their safety was secured by their chief men.

Hence, the Prophet here shakes off from the Jews this vain confidence, *Thy pastors*, he says, *the wind shall eat up.* By pastors he understands the king and his counsellors, as well as the priests and the prophets. The word *eat up*, means that all would be consumed by the wind. Sometimes, indeed, men are said to feed on the wind, that is, when they entertain vain confidences. So the wind means in other places vain hopes, as they say; but it is in another sense that the Prophet speaks, when he says that pastors would be eaten up by the wind, that is, that they would vanish away

[1] The כִּי is omitted in the *Sept.*, and the clause is given as in apposition with the former, which seems to be the meaning; "the way" was not to hear God's voice. *Blayney*, very unsuitably, connects the last line with the following verse. I render the verse thus,—

21. I spoke to thee in thy quiet times;
Thou didst say, "I will not hear:"
This *has been* thy way from thy childhood;
For thou didst not hear my voice.

It has been usual with many to render "hear," "obey;" but not rightly. The complaint against the people was, that they would not "hear" the voice of God, much less obey it. The answer here was that they would not "hear." The complaint, or the charge against them is the same, and the verb ought to be so rendered.—*Ed.*

like the smoke. Thus God shews that their presumption, and frauds, and false imaginations, were nothing but smoke and emptiness.[1]

He then speaks of their *lovers*,—that they would *migrate into exile:* for the Jews thought at first, that they would be impregnable as long as the throne of David stood; and then we know that the common people were easily deceived by external splendour, when they saw that the priests as well as the prophets and the king's counsellors were endued with craftiness, and swelling with great pride; and hence they disregarded what the prophets threatened. Now, the second ground of confidence was their alliance with the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and other neighbouring nations. Therefore God, after having said, that all their pastors would be destroyed, adds, that the Egyptians and others would be driven into captivity.

He afterwards says, *Surely, thou shalt then be ashamed, and shalt blush for all thy wickedness;*[2] that is, "Thou shalt at length know that thou art justly punished for thy sins, when God shall denude thee of all aids, and make it evident that everything that now gives thee confidence is alto-

[1] The wind sometimes means what is empty; and in this sense the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and the *Arab.* take it here, "All thy pastors the wind shall feed;" but the *Syr.* and the *Targ.* take the "wind" as meaning a blasting or a stormy wind: "All thy pastors the wind shall feed on," or eat up, is the *Syr.;* and the *Targ.* gives this paraphrase, "All thy pastors shall be scattered unto every wind." The verb, no doubt, means to feed, and to feed on, or eat up, or consume, but not to scatter or disperse. Therefore the meaning here is, either that the pastors would have nothing but what was empty to support them, or that they would be consumed as by a blast. The first is most consonant to the tenor of the passage; for the aid of their lovers is previously referred to; but they would find this aid to be "wind," and then it is added, that these lovers as well as themselves would be driven into captivity. There is a striking paronomasia in the words. The word for pastors is derived from the verb to feed. We may give this version, "All thy feeders shall the wind feed." The feeders had fed the people with winds, with empty expectations, and they, in their turn, would have nothing but wind, what was empty, to live upon or to support them.—*Ed.*

[2] Our version is better as to the two verbs here used, "ashamed and confounded." The latter is stronger than the former. The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* invert the order, "confounded and ashamed." The *Sept.* and *Arab.* have "ashamed and dishonoured," or despised. The first verb means simply to be ashamed, and the other to turn aside as it were from a sense of shame, as one not able to look on others.—*Ed.*

gether empty and vain." And he mentions *all wickedness;* for the Jews had not sinned only in one thing, but had added evils to evils, so that they had provoked God's vengeance by an immense heap of wickedness. Their acknowledgment, however, would not be that which availed to repentance, but extorted; for the reprobate, willing or unwilling, are often constrained to acknowledge their shame. It follows—

23. O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!

23. Sedisti (*hoc est*, sedem tibi posuisti) in Libano, nidulata es in cedris, quomodo gratiosa fuisti (*alii vertunt*, precata es) in veniendo tibi dolores, dolorem quasi parturientis (*ad verbum, sed sensus est*, quomodo gratiosa eris, ubi venerint tibi dolores, dolor quasi fœminæ parturientis.)

The Prophet confirms the same thing in other words; and hence it appears how difficult it is to shake off from men their false confidence, when they give themselves up to earthly things. As soon, then, as false confidence strikes its roots into the hearts of men, they cannot be moved either by any threatenings or by any dangers; even though death itself were hanging over them, they yet remain unconcerned: and hence Isaiah upbraids them and says, That they had made a covenant with death. (Isaiah xxviii. 15.) This was the reason why the Prophet here multiplied words and used greater vehemence; it was for the purpose of correcting that perverseness which prevailed among the Jews; for they thought themselves beyond the reach of those darts which God's hands would throw.

He therefore says, that they had *set their seat on Lebanon*, and made their *nest among the cedars*. Some interpreters understand this figuratively of the cedar houses in which they dwelt; that is, that they ornamented their houses or palaces, as we have seen, with boards of cedar. But I take the words more simply,—That they considered Lebanon as an impregnable stronghold, and that he compares them to birds which choose the highest cedars to make their nests in. The meaning is, that the Jews were so blinded by their pride, that they thought that they had Lebanon as a safe refuge, and also that they imagined that they had nests as it were in its cedars. But there is no doubt but that the

Prophet, in mentioning this one particular, meant to include all those false and vain confidences with which the Jews were inebriated. But he speaks by way of concession, as though he had said, that the Jews were not terrified by God's threatenings, because they cast their eyes on Lebanon and on its lofty cedars.

But *how gracious*, he says, *wilt thou be;* that is, what grace wilt thou find, *when sorrows shall come upon thee, the pain as of one in travail.*[1] The Prophet expresses here what often occurs in Scripture, that when the ungodly say, "Peace and safety," sudden ruin comes on them. (1 Thess. v. 3.) He then does not allow that the Jews gained anything by thinking that they would have a quiet station on Lebanon, and by having their nests in the cedars, for God would bring on them sudden pains like those of women, who, while laughing and full of mirth, are in a moment seized with the pangs of childbearing. Jeremiah now says, that a similar thing would happen to the Jews. I touch but lightly on this point, while yet it is worthy of long and careful meditation. Let us then know, that nothing is more intolerable to God than when we promise to ourselves a quiet rest while he proclaims war against us, and while we, as it were designedly, daily provoke him. It follows—

24. *As* I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.

24. Vivo ego, dicit Jehova, quod si esset Coniahu filius Joakim regis Jehudah annulus signatorius super manum dexteram meam (*hoc est*, in manu dextera mea,) ego inde te evellam (*mutatio est personæ.*)

[1] The former part of this passage is differently rendered by all the early versions: the *Sept.*, "thou wilt groan;" the *Vulg.*, "how thou hast groaned;" the *Syr.*, "how much wilt thou groan." The reading adopted was נהנת, from נהה, instead of נחנת, for the ׳ is not found in many copies, nor in the Keri, nor in connection with the two participles at the beginning of the verse. The *Targ.* has "what wilt thou do." Most of modern expounders take the text as we have it, and there are no different readings. Then the whole verse would read as follows,—

23. Inhabitress of Lebanon! nestler in the cedars!
How graceful (or favoured) shalt thou be,
When come on thee shall throes,
A pain like *that of* childbearing!

The gender is feminine, and either Jerusalem or the house or family of David is meant. The word for "throes" means girding pains or pangs. The verse is the language of irony. The people were so hardened, that nothing else would have touched them.—*Ed.*

God here makes an oath that he had resolved to punish Jeconiah, who was also called Jehoiachin. And he says, That though he sat on the throne of David, he would yet be a miserable exile. We have, indeed, seen elsewhere, that the Jews were so fascinated as to think that God was bound to them; and at the same time they allowed themselves every liberty in sinning, under the pretence that God had promised that the kingdom of David would remain as long as the sun and moon continued in the heavens, (Psalm lxxxix. 37;) but they did not consider that there was a mutual compact in God's covenant; for he required them to be faithful on their part: nor did they consider that many were Abraham's children according to the flesh, who were not his lawful children before God. As to the king himself, he never thought it possible that he should be driven into exile, because he was David's successor and ordained by God.

This, then, is the reason why God now declares, *Even though that Coniah were as a sealing ring on my finger, I would yet pluck it off thence.* However exalted then was Jeconiah, God shews that his dignity would be only for a time, and would soon fade away; for he would be at length thrust from his throne, and his condition wholly changed. The word Coniah is, no doubt, in a mutilated form, instead of Jehoiachin. The Prophet then calls him Coniah by way of contempt, as though he did not think him worthy of the complete name, but expresses it in two instead of four syllables. So the Prophet, though Jeconiah was then the king, yet calls him Coniah.[1]

Now, this passage teaches us, that we ought not to be in such a way proud of God's favours, as to forget what we are, but ever to remember that we are dependent on him, and that we ought diligently to pray to him at all times; for security breeds contempt; hence it is, that God strips us of the ornaments with which we have been clothed; and it is a just reward for our ingratitude. Let all, then, who excel

[1] The early Versions throughout this passage give his name as Jeconiah; but the *Targ.*, Coniah, according to the Hebrew. The Rabbins give various reasons for the change, and others too, which are frivolous. The reason given by *Calvin*, and adopted by *Gataker*, *Lowth*, and others, is confirmed by the contemptuous language used in the 28th verse.—*Ed.*

others know, that what has been given may at any time be taken away, except good conscience be as it were the guard to preserve God's gifts and benefits, so that they may not at any time fall away or be lost. It follows—

25. And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of *them* whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

25. Et ponam te (tradam te) in manum quærentium animam tuam, et in manum eorum a quorum facie formidas (metuis) et in manum Nebuchadrezzar regis Babylonii et in manum Chaldæorum.

This verse is connected with the last, and more fully explains what had been briefly said. The plucking off of the sealing ring from God's finger took place when Jeconiah was deprived of his glory and his kingdom, and made subject to the king of Babylon.[1] Though the king spared his life, as sacred history testifies, (2 Kings xxv. 7; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6; Jer. lii. 11,) yet when he surrendered himself to him, he trembled as though he saw the sword ready to cut off his head; for he expected no mercy, and his fear made him to go out of the city, and to surrender himself to his inveterate enemy. The import of the whole is, that King Jeconiah would come to extremities, for he would be forced to give up himself helpless and unarmed into the hands of his cruel enemies.

But he repeats the commination, and enlarges on the subject; *I will deliver thee,* he says, *into the hand of those who seek thy life,* and then, *into the hand of those whose face thou dreadest,* and, in the third place, *into the hand of Nebuchadrezer,* (Nabuchadnezer, king of Babylon, is called here and in other places, Nebuchadrezer,) and lastly, *into the hand of the Chaldeans.* Thus the Prophet recounts, as it were in order, several kinds of death, that Jeconiah might know how dreadful God's judgment would be. He adds—

26. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

26. Et projiciam te et matrem tuam quæ genuit te in terram alienam, in qua non estis geniti, et illic moriemini.

[1] There is here a striking contrast: God would pluck off Jeconiah, were he like a signet on his right *hand,* and would deliver him into the *hand* of his enemies. From being as it were on the divine hand, he would be given up into the hand of those who sought his life.—*Ed.*

Here, again, the Prophet confirms what he had said of the severe vengeance which God would take on Jeconiah. And though he was in his thirty-seventh year brought out of prison, and admitted unto the royal table, among other princes, he yet died in exile; and perhaps it would have been better for him to continue in prison till his death than to have been corrupted by allurements when he became one of the princes, for he thus defiled himself. However this may have been, he died in exile together with his mother Nehusta.

The Prophet then enhanced the grievousness of his punishment by saying, *I will cause thee to migrate*, or cast thee out,[1] *and thy mother who bare thee.* It is added, for the sake of indignity, that the mother of the king would be led captive with him; for the female sex is often spared, and she was also advanced in years. But God executed upon her his judgment, because she was his associate in impiety: "I will remove you," he says, "*into foreign lands, in which ye were not born, and there ye shall die.*"

27. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.	27. Et in terram ad quam ipsi levant animum suum, ut revertantur illuc, non revertentur illuc.

The Prophet again changes the person, and yet not inelegantly, for he speaks here as one indignant, and after having addressed a few words to King Jeconiah, he turns aside from him and declares what God would do. Thus, when we think one hardly worthy to be addressed, we change our discourse; and after having spoken a few words to him, we take another mode of speaking. In the same manner, the Prophet spoke very indignantly when he addressed Jehoiakim, and then he declared how God would deal with him: he passed by him as though he was deaf or unworthy of being noticed. We thus see the design of the Prophet in the change he makes in this passage.

Into the land, he says, *to which they raise up their mind that they may return, there they shall not return.* He had

[1] The word is strong; it means to toss, to hurl, violently to cast forth, to throw with force, as one throws a missile weapon. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 11. The "mittam" of the *Vulg.* is too weak; the "ἀποῤῥίψω" of the *Sept.* is more suitable.—*Ed.*

said before that both the king and his mother would die in a foreign land, and he now confirms the same thing; for the foolish notion, that the king of Babylon would be at length propitious to them, could not but with great difficulty be eradicated from their minds: nor is there a doubt but that such thoughts as these were entertained,—"When Nebuchadnezzar shall see us coming suppliantly to him, he will be turned to mercy, for what more does he require? He does not mean to fix here his royal palace; it will satisfy him to have the people tributary to him; and when he shall find that I am a man of no courage, he will prefer having me a king, rather than to appoint a new one." Such, then, was the reasoning which the king had with his courtiers. Hence this vain persuasion is what the Prophet now demolishes: *They raise up their mind* to the land, that is, they think of a free return at length into their own country; for to raise up the mind is to apply the mind or thought to any thing. *They raise up,* then, *their mind to the land,* that is, the land of Judah; but they *shall never return thither,* whatever they may promise to themselves.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou promisest to us rest nowhere except in thy celestial kingdom, we may never suffer ourselves, while travelling on the earth, to be allured and driven here and there; but may we in the meantime call on thee with resigned minds, and thus carry on our warfare, that how much soever thou mayest be pleased by various contests to try and prove us, we may still continue to be thy faithful soldiers, until we shall enjoy that rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

[1] The phrase, "to raise or lift up the mind," or the soul, is to set the heart on a thing. The *Vulg.* has adopted the Hebrew idiom, "to which they lift up their soul." The *Sept.* leaves out "return," and have only, "which they wish in their souls." Our version retains the true idea, though it be not literal, "whereunto they desire to return;" literally, "where they *are* lifting up their soul to return there:" the two adverbs of place are given, the relative adverb and the pronoun adverb, if we may so call them. It is the same sort of idiom as when a relative and a pronoun are used, one before and the other after the verb, as in verse 25, "whom thou fearest (or dreadest) their face," rightly rendered in our version, "whose face thou fearest:" but the *Welsh* is literally the Hebrew; the idiom is exactly the same.—*Ed.*

Lecture Eighty-Fourth.

28. *Is* this man Coniah a despised broken idol? *is he* a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

28. An simulachrum contemptum, contritum, vir iste Coniah? an vas, in quo non est oblectatio? ut quid disjecti sunt ipse et semen ejus et projecti super terram quam non noverunt?

As the Prophet was hardly able to convince the Jews of what he had foretold, he confirms the same thing; but he speaks here as of what was incredible. He assumes the character of one greatly wondering, that others might cease to wonder. He then asks, whether it was possible that Jeconiah should be driven into exile and there miserably perish? We now see the design of the Prophet, that as the Jews thought that the kingdom would be perpetual, it was necessary to shake off such a notion, so that they might know that God had not in vain threatened what we have already noticed. But there is in these questions a kind of irony, for the Prophet might have made a positive assertion in plain words; but from regard to others, he hesitates through wonder, or seems to doubt as of a thing that was monstrous.

Is he a *statue?* he says; some translate "a vessel;" but it seems to be taken here, as in other places, in its proper sense, a statue. *Is*, then, *this man Coniah a despised and a broken statue?* for נִפֹּץ, *puts*, is both to fail and to break.[1] We have said that a part of his name was left out by way of contempt; still, as the Jews were so blinded by the royal dignity that they could not believe the prophecy, he asks respecting it as of a thing incredible. *Is he a vessel?* &c., he adds. The Hebrew word כְּלִי, *cali*, we know, is taken for any kind of vessel; for the ancients called all kinds of furniture vessels. He asks, then, *Is he a contemptible vessel? Is he a vessel in which there is no delight?* He had before said that he was a despised statue. *Why are they cast forth, he*

[1] The verb means to loose, to set free; and it is here in a passive sense, to be loosed or set free. It seems to refer to the setting free the idol or statue from its fastenings; therefore, "broken down" would be its best rendering.—*Ed.*

and his seed, and thrown into a land which they have not known? that is, into a remote land?[1] And we know that it is a hard lot when one is driven far away from his own country. There is, then, no doubt but that the Prophet enhances the grievousness of the evil when he speaks of an unknown country: for Zedekiah, who was put on the throne, was his uncle; and of his posterity the first was Salathiel, born in exile. It now follows—

29. O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

30. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

29. Terra, terra, terra, audi sermonem Jehovæ,

30. Sic dicit Jehova, Scribite virum hunc orbum (*vel*, solitarium) virum, cui prospere non erit in diebus suis; quia prospere non habebit quisquam ex semine ejus sedens super solium Davidis et dominans adhuc in Jehudah.

The Prophet more fully confirms what I have lately referred to; and the repetition was not superfluous in exclaiming "earth" three times, for as the hardness of iron is overcome by the repeated strokes of the hammer, so the Prophet repeated the word "earth," that he might subdue that perverseness in which the Jews had so hardened themselves that no threats of God moved them. He did not adopt this vehemence, as rhetoricians do who aim to appear eloquent; but it was necessity that constrained him thus to assail that refractory people, who would have otherwise turned a deaf ear

[1] It is singular that all the early versions soften down the strong terms used in this verse; not one of them give a faithful translation. The *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Arab.* give hardly the half of the verse, and what they give is divested of the tone and spirit of the original. The *Vulg.* leaves out the word "idol" or statue, and puts "an earthen vessel" in its place. The whole verse I render as follows,—

28. A contemptible, broken down idol!
Is this the man Coniah?
Is he a vessel in which there is no delight?
Why are they cast out, he and his seed,
And sent into a land which they have not known?

There is the relative *which* understood after "vessel" in the third line. The *Welsh*, which in this kind of idiom is exactly the same with the Hebrew, admits of the same sort of ellipsis,—

Ai llester *yw* heb hoffder ynddo?

Which is verbally the Hebrew, "Is he a vessel without delight in it?"

The "casting out" was from the land of Canaan, and the "sending" was into the unknown land.—*Ed.*

to what we have observed and read. By this preface, then, the Prophet especially shews that he spoke of God's dreadful judgment, and also reminded the Jews of the certainty of this prophecy, though they were persuaded that the kingdom would never fall. Hence in this repetition we see that there is an implied reproof, as though he had said that they were indeed deaf, but that it was to no purpose, for they would be constrained to see the fulfilment of what they did not then believe. *Earth, earth, earth, hear*, he says.[1]

Then he adds, *Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man solitary*, or childless. Some think that these words were addressed to angels or to prophets; but I regard not such a notion as well founded: this mode of speaking seems rather to me to have been taken from common practice, for decrees which were to continue in force for a long time were usually written. When an edict was proclaimed, and was to be in force only for a few days, it was not commonly recorded in the public monuments; but when a law was enacted, which was to be binding on posterity, it was written in the public tablets. Then the Prophet intimates that this judgment of God could not be rendered void, nor would be momentary like decrees which in a few days are disregarded and soon forgotten, but that it would be certain and permanent. *Write ye*, then, *this man childless.* This bereavement is set in opposition to the promise of God, that there would be perpetual successors to David on his throne as long as the sun and moon were in the heavens. (Psalm lxxxix. 37.) And the Prophet shews here that this promise as to Jeconiah would not be fulfilled.[2]

[1] It does not appear whether *Calvin* meant the earth generally or the land of Judea. But the latter most probably is what is intended. The version, then, ought to be, "Land, land, land!" The *Sept.* and the *Arab.* have "land" only twice, but the other versions have it three times as in Hebrew. The paraphrase of the *Targ.* is singular, "From their own land they have made them to migrate to another land; land of Israel! hear the words of the Lord."

"Land" means often the inhabitants; and what follows proves that it has this meaning here: for it is added, "Write ye," &c.—*Ed.*

[2] The word rendered "childless" properly means "wholly stripped," or destitute, or "quite naked." It is rendered "banished" by the *Sept.*, but "childless" by the *Vulg.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.* He was "childless" as a king, having had no son as a successor on the throne of David; but

And he adds, Write ye *this man as one who will not prosper in his days; nay,* (for כִּי, *ki*, seems to me to be emphatic here,) *no one of his seed shall prosper;* and then he adds an explanation, *sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.*

Now, it is no wonder that the Jews regarded this judgment of God with abhorrence, as though it was something monstrous, for God seemed to them to be inconsistent with himself, for he had testified that his covenant would never be rendered void, and had appealed to the sun and moon as witnesses. Hence, when the posterity of David failed, at least when his throne was subverted, and no one appeared as his successor, the truth of the promise seemed to have failed, which was very strange. But it was possible for God, who doeth wonders, to execute such punishment on Jeconiah and on such as were like him, and yet in a secret and incomprehensible manner to bring things about, so that the covenant which he had made should not wholly fail. The grace of God, then, was hidden for a time, but never extinguished; for at length a rod did grow up from the stem of Jesse, as it is said by Isaiah.

However, the words seem to imply otherwise, for Jeconiah is said to be *solitary,* and then *unprosperous;* and lastly, the Prophet declares that no one of his seed would sit on the royal throne. But we must bear in mind that these

he had children, see 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18. And that this is the meaning appears evident from the end of the verse.

Scott thinks that Zedekiah, the uncle of Jeconiah, is the person spoken of in these two last verses. He considers that the contents of this chapter were repeated in Zedekiah's reign as a warning to him. But this view is not consistent with the general tenor of the chapter. See especially verses 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19; these shew evidently that the prophecy was delivered in the time, probably in the latter time of Jehoiakim; then the Prophet proceeds, in verse 24 to the end of the chapter, prophetically to describe the fate of his son Jeconiah. And having said that he would be childless as a king, that none of his seed would sit on the throne of David, he introduces in the next chapter, which is connected with this, the "righteous branch," the Messiah, the King of Zion. The proper division of the chapter is at the ninth verse. According to this view there is a perfect consistency,—Jeconiah was the last reigning prince in the right line (Zedekiah, his uncle, was not in the right line) on the throne of David, as a temporal sovereign; then he, of whom David was a type, came, not to sit and to rule on the visible throne of David, but on that which it represented.—*Ed.*

words are to be confined to a temporary punishment, and extend only to the coming of Christ, though the posterity of David, as we shall hereafter see, did begin to arise in Zerubbabel, but this was only an obscure and a small prelude. We must, therefore, come to the time of Christ if we would reconcile these two things which seem repugnant,—that Jeconiah became childless, and that a successor from the seed of David never failed; it was so, because this childlessness was only for a time; and this interruption of God's grace was something like death; but in course of time it appeared that God was mindful of his covenant, even at a time when he seemed to have forgotten it. And this prophecy, therefore, ought to be connected with that of Ezekiel, "Remove ye, remove, remove the crown until he comes whose it is." (Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.) There, also, Ezekiel repeats the word "remove" three times, as though he had said that there would be no kingdom of David, not only for a few months or years, but through a series of many ages.

There is no wonder, then, that the Prophet declares here that Jeconiah would be childless, for such a sad calamity for so many ages, as the throne of David trodden under foot with scorn and contempt, might have overwhelmed the faithful with despair. This, then, was the reason why he said that he would be *childless*, and also that his whole posterity would be under a curse. But we must bear in mind that exception, which is expressed by another Prophet, "until he comes whose the crown is." (Ezek. xxi. 27.) For it was reserved for the head of Christ, though for a long time it had been exposed to dishonour and to the reproaches of all nations.

Now it is useful to know this, for we are taught that God is ever so consistent with himself, that his covenant, which he has made with Christ and with all his members, never fails, and that yet he punishes hypocrites even unto death. If any one, during a long period, had sought for the Church in the world, there was none in appearance; yet God shewed that he was faithful to his promises, for suddenly there arose a people regenerated by the Gospel, so that his covenant was not dead, but as it were for a time buried. The truth of God, then, was proved by the event; and yet he took a

dreadful vengeance on the ingratitude of men when he thus blinded the whole world. Now follows—

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.

2. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.

3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

1. Væ Pastoribus qui perdunt et dissipant gregem pascuorum meorum! dicit Jehova.

2. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, super Pastores pascentes populum meum, Vos dissipastis gregem meum et dispulistis, et non visitastis eos (*vel*, oves meas;) Ecce ego visitans (*hoc est*, visitabo) super vos malitiam actionum vestrarum, dicit Jehova:

3. Ego autem colligam residuum ovium mearum ex omnibus terris, ad quas expulero eas, et reverti faciam eas ad caulas suas, et fructificabunt et multiplicabuntur.

Here the Prophet promises the restoration of the Church; but he reminds hypocrites that there was no reason for them on that account to flatter themselves, especially the king, his councillors, and the priests. Then this prophecy is a mixture of promises and threatenings, for God promises that he would be propitious to the miserable Jews, after having chastised them, so that the seed of Abraham might not be entirely cut off: he yet deprives hypocrites of vain confidence, so that they might not falsely apply to themselves the hope of salvation, from which they had excluded themselves by their impiety. And this is what ought to be noticed, for as soon as God's mercy is offered, hypocrites apply to themselves whatever God promises, and become more and more insolent, as though they held him bound to them; for impunity leads them to take more liberty to sin. Hence it is that they boast that they are safe, for they consider themselves to be the people of God. The Prophet, therefore, teaches here that whatever God promises belongs to his elect, that it does not appertain indiscriminately to all, nor ought to be extended to hypocrites who falsely pretend his name, but that it peculiarly belongs to the elect, though they may be small in number, and though they may be despised.

He says first, *Wo to the pastors who destroy,*[1] &c. Here are contrary things—a pastor and a destroyer! But he concedes to them the name which was honourable; and yet he derides their false boasting, for they thought that they could hide their crimes under this shade, falsely claimed. Though then he calls them pastors, he yet removes the mask, and thus shews that they in vain boasted while they assumed the name of pastors. "Ye are pastors," he says, "and ye are destroyers! *who dissipate* or scatter *the flock of my pastures.*"[2]

Here God shews the reason why he was so grievously displeased with these pastors; for by exercising tyranny over the people, they not only injured men, but also injured and dishonoured God, who had received under his own protection his chosen people. It is indeed true that they deserved such a scattering; for we have already seen in many places, that the people could by no means be excused when they were deceived by wicked and unfaithful leaders; for in this way was rendered to them all their past reward for having provoked God's wrath against themselves, from the least to the greatest. But the impiety of wicked pastors was not on this account excusable; for they ought to have considered for what purpose this burden was laid on them, and also by whom they had been appointed. God then intimates that great injury was done to him, when the people were thus so ignominiously scattered. He was himself the chief pastor; he had put as it were in his own place the king and his counsellors and also the priests. Justly then does he now condemn them, because they had *destroyed the flock* of God, according to what is said in another place, "That they had destroyed his vineyard." (Chap. xii. 10; Isaiah v. 3.) In short, when God calls the Jews *the flock of his pastures,* he does not regard what they deserved, or what they were, but he, on the contrary, sets forth the favour bestowed on the seed of Abraham. He has respect then here to his gratuitous

[1] It is an exclamation in the *Sept.* and *Syr.*, "Oh! the Pastors," &c., but a denunciation in the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.*, "Wo to the Pastors," &c. The original may be rendered in either way; the latter is the most suitable here.—*Ed.*

[2] The word is singular in Hebrew, "pasture," or feeding.—*Ed.*

adoption, though the Jews had rendered themselves unworthy of such a benefit.

He afterwards adds, *Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, to the pastors who feed my people.* In the same sense he calls them now his people, as he had called them before the flock of his pastures. They had alienated themselves from God, and he had already by his own decree repudiated them; and God might in one respect have deemed them aliens; and yet in respect of the covenant he acknowledged them as his own; and hence he calls them *his people.* He now then confirms what we have already noticed, that these pastors were not only thieves and robbers, but also sacrilegious; for they not only had exercised cruelty towards the flock, but as far as they could injured and dishonoured God himself, who had undertaken the care of that people.

But there is here a twofold concession, he calls them *pastors*, and they are said to *feed* the people. He had said before that they destroyed and scattered the flock, and now he says that they *fed* them; but in what sense we well know, for by this kind of irony he meant to reprove them; they boasted that they were pastors, and they thought that their crimes would by such a covering be buried in the sight of God, as in the sight of men. In a similar manner, when we speak in the present day of the Pope and his mitred bishops and filthy clergy, we use expressions which are commonly employed. But Antichrist is everything but a father, and we know how far they are from being really bishops who assume the title; and as to the clergy, the name is sacred, but they are very far from being God's heritage. We indeed make no account of these empty titles. But it is a great aggravation of their guilt, that they being devils, should assume angelic names, that they being wolves and robbers, and sacrilegious, should falsely pretend God's name, and recommend themselves by spurious titles, as though they were pastors, bishops, abbots, and prelates, and what not.

So then our Prophet calls those whom he condemns, by way of taunt, *pastors*, and says that they *fed*, that is, were called for this end, to do this work. But he afterwards adds, *My flock have ye scattered, and driven away, and not visit-*

ed.[1] Surely it was not to feed, to have no care for the sheep. To *visit* is to be extended here to every part of the duty of overseeing, as though he had said, that the flock had been by them neglected, betrayed, and deserted. We hence see that they had wholly neglected their pastoral office. But the other two things are still worse, for they had *scattered* and *driven away* the flock. Their sloth in neglecting the flock was not to be tolerated; but it was still more intolerable when they exercised so much cruelty as to scatter the flock as though they were deadly enemies; and yet these are the things for which Jeremiah condemns them. We hence see that there was an implied taunt, when he conceded to them the office of feeding.

He then denounces judgment on them, *I will visit upon you the wickedness of your doings.* Here God declares that he would punish the pastors, to whom was justly ascribed the scattering of the people. For though no one was exempt from blame, as it has been before stated; yet the main fault belonged to these pastors. This then is the reason why God declares that he would take vengeance; for he would not have his flock scattered with impunity.

It then follows, *And I will gather* my flock. As they had

[1] The meaning seems to be that they had caused the flock to be scattered and driven away through their bad conduct, because they did not take care of them, as the last verb means. The two first verbs are indeed in Hiphil, and may be rendered causatively thus,—

Ye have caused my sheep to be scattered,
And have caused them to be driven away;
And ye have not cared for them.

The last verb is not in Hiphil, and states the reason why the sheep had been dispersed. It means to oversee, to take care of, to attend to. The dispersion was owing to the neglect of the pastors in taking care of the sheep. The scattering or dispersion was their exile; which God states in the third verse was his act as a punishment for their wickedness, but the cause of dispersion was the conduct of the pastors.

We see here an instance of the order in which ideas are often stated by the Prophets. Scattering, though mentioned first, is the last act, the most ostensible; the driving out of the land was the previous act, and the first in order, though the last stated, was the neglect of the pastors in taking an oversight of them. It is to begin with the effect and to go back to the cause. "You have caused them to be scattered to all lands, you have made them to be driven out of their own land, and you have neglected to take care of them." These are the three points of accusation, but stated in an inverted order. There are constant instances of this kind of arrangement.—*Ed.*

driven the people away, so God promises that it would be his care to gather them. And yet he ascribes to himself what he had imputed to them—that he had driven away his flock, but in a different sense; the pastors had scattered the flock, not only by their sloth, but also by their cruelty, for they became rapacious wolves; but God had punished the people, for they all had fully deserved such a scattering. We hence see that the ungodly execute God's judgment; but they are not on this account excusable as though they were God's ministers, for they have nothing less in view. Nor can God be involved in their sin, while he thus employs them to execute his purpose. In short, the scattering of the people was a just punishment from God, for they had all departed from the faith, they had broken the sacred bond of the covenant, by which God had bound them to himself. It was also the fault of the pastors, because they avariciously and cruelly tyrannized over them. The *pastors*, as I have said, were not only the priests, but also the king and his counsellors.

I will gather, he says, not the flock, but *the remnant of the sheep*. God intimates here that he would be so merciful as to receive unto favour, not all indiscriminately, but a small number, constituting the elect. And hence Paul carefully distinguished between the people and the remnant of grace, or the gratuitous remnant; for Christ appeared by his coming to have abolished the covenant by which God had adopted the children of Abraham, but Paul does not admit this. Now, if any one objects and says that the greater part of the people had been cut off, this he allows; but he says that the covenant remains valid in the remnant, and produces also examples, such as that of which we now speak. God then has ever been the preserver of his Church; and thus his gratuitous adoption, by which he had chosen the seed of Abraham, never fails. But this adoption is effectual only as to the remnant.

As to the word *remnant*, the fewness of those whom God had resolved to gather is not only intimated, but also the vengeance, which as to time had gone before; for God seemed to have destroyed the Jews when they were driven away into various lands, as they had no name remaining, the

kingdom and the priesthood were abolished. It was therefore a certain kind of death, as I have before said: but God here declares that there would be some remnant, according to what is said in Isaiah x. 22, that God saved a few as it were from the consumption; for he refers there to the very few that remained alive, when they thought that all was over with the whole people, that there was no hope of restoration.

I will gather, he says, *the residue of my sheep from all the lands to which I shall have driven them*. He again confirms what I have stated, that there would be no place for mercy until he had cleansed his Church from its many filthy pollutions. The scattering then of the people into various lands was the purgation of the Church, according to what God says, that he would separate the refuse and the chaff from the wheat in chastising his people; for as the chaff and the refuse are blown here and there when the wheat is winnowed, and the wheat only remains and is afterwards laid up in the granary; so when God drove his people away into various lands, he then purged his Church. If any one objects and says, "Then the remnant were dealt with like the refuse;" it is true as to the individuals, but God refers here to himself, when he calls them his *own sheep*, who were yet unworthy of such an honour.

He then adds, that he would *bring them back to their folds*,[1] *that they might be fruitful*, that is, bring forth and increase, *and be multiplied*. By folds he no doubt means the land of Canaan; for there was then no wealth in the world which the Jews would have preferred to the inheritance promised to them; the whole world was to them an exile. For God had chosen that land in which they dwelt, and had consecrated it to himself, and he gave it to them as an earnest or a pledge of the eternal inheritance. Rightly then does he now call that land folds, for they lived there under his guardianship and protection. The temple was as it were the

[1] "To their own pasture," is the *Sept.* and *Arab.*; "to their own country," the *Vulg.*; "to their own fold," the *Syr.*; "to their own places," the *Targ.* The Hebrew is, "to their own folds;" the word is plural, and means generally "habitations," either for men, or cattle, or beasts. As sheep are mentioned, "folds" no doubt is the proper word.—*Ed.*

pastoral staff; they knew that God dwelt there, that being protected by his power they might continue in safety. Since then there was safety for them under God's protection in the land of Canaan, he calls it their fold. Then he says, that they may *be fruitful,* and *be multiplied;* for among other blessings their increase was not the least. He afterwards adds,—

4. And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

4. Et excitabo super eos pastores, et pascent eos (*hoc est,* qui pascant,) et non timebunt amplius, et non pavebunt, et non deficient, dicit Jehova.

He confirms the promise, for he would give them faithful and true pastors, who would perform their office as it behoved them; for it would not be enough that the sheep should be restored to their folds, except they were fed. We indeed know that a sheep is a silly animal, and therefore has need of a shepherd to rule and guide it. God then intimates by these words, that after he had collected his flock into the fold it would be the object of his constant care; for he would appoint pastors, who would discharge their office in a far different way from wolves and sacrilegious robbers. He then adds a promise as to their security, which we shall consider to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou didst formerly take such heavy vengeance on the impiety of thine ancient people, that thou didst not spare even kings, who were representatives of Christ, nor their counsellors,—O grant, that we at this day may continue in obedience to thy word, and not so kindle thy vengeance against us by our ingratitude, as to provoke thee to punish us with that sad and dreadful desolation which thou formerly didst not in vain denounce on thy people; but may thy Church become more and more fruitful, so that we may know that thou art really gracious to us; and may we thus in quietness give thee thanks, and suffer ourselves to be ruled by thee, even by the hand of thine only-begotten Son, until we shall be gathered from our scattering in this world into that eternal rest which he has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Fifth.

We said in our yesterday's Lecture, that when the Lord promised to give pastors, he pointed out by this mode of speaking the continuance of his favour; as though he had said, that he would not only be the Redeemer of his people, but would also take care of the safety of those whom he delivered from exile. The two things are indeed necessary, for it would have profited them nothing to have the hand of God stretched forth once in their behalf, except he continued his favours to them to the end. The sum of the whole, then, is this, that the Jews, after being restored to their own country, would be under God's protection, so that their safety would be secured, and be permanent and not momentary.

By adding, *they shall not fear, nor dread, nor fail,*[1] or be lessened, he intimates that the Jews would be in a tranquil state under the pastors whom he would set over them. And we know that the duty of a true pastor consists of two parts; for it is not enough for him to rule and guide the sheep, except he also defends them against all violence, the incursions of robbers and wolves. Now, this tranquillity is set in contrast with the disquietude with which the Jews had been for a long time harassed; for we know that they had been tossed with great anxieties, owing to the continual incursions of their enemies. As, then, they were trembling continually when they heard rumours of war, God promises them here a better condition, as we shall hereafter see more clearly. It now follows,—

[1] This verb is omitted by the *Sept.* and *Arab.*, and rendered, "no one of their number shall be sought," by the *Vulg.*; "nor wander," by the *Syr.*; "nor be moved," by the *Targ.* Our version has followed that of *Montanus*, "neither shall they be lacking." *Venema* and *Gataker* render it, "nor shall they be missing;" and *Blayney*, "nor shall they be visited," that is, with judgment. But the verb is used in the sense of being wanting or missing, see Num. xxxi. 49; 1 Sam. xxv. 7; xv. 21; and this is the meaning most suitable to this passage,—

And I will set over them pastors,
And they will feed them;
And they shall fear no more, nor be terrified,
Nor be missing, saith Jehovah.—*Ed.*

5. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

6. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

5. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et suscitabo Davidi germen justum; et regnabit rex, et prudenter (*vel*, prospere) aget: faciet judicium et justitiam in terra.

6. Diebus ejus servabitur Jehudah, et Israel habitabit in fiducia (*hoc est*, tranquille:) et hoc nomen, quo vocabunt eum, Jehova justitia nostra.

The Prophet confirms what he had before said of the renewal of the Church; for it would not have been in itself sufficiently strong to say, "I have promised pastors who shall faithfully perform their duty," except the only true Pastor had been set before them, on whom God's covenant was founded, and from whom was to be expected the accomplishment of the promises which were hoped for. And it was usual with all the prophets, whenever they gave the people the hope of salvation, to bring forward the coming of the Messiah, for in him have God's promises always been, yea, and amen. (2 Cor. i. 20.) This, indeed, appears now, under the Gospel, more clear than formerly; but the faith of the Fathers could not have been complete except they directed their thoughts to the Messiah. As, then, neither the love of God could have been made certain to the Fathers, nor the testimony of his kindness and paternal favour be confirmed without Christ, this is the reason why the prophets were wont to set Christ before their eyes whenever they sought to inspire the miserable with a good hope, who otherwise must have been overwhelmed with sorrow and driven into despair.

What, therefore, so often occurs in the prophets is deserving of special notice, so that we may know that God's promises will become ineffectual to us, or be suspended, or even vanish away, except we raise all our thoughts to Christ, and seek in him what would not be otherwise certain and sure to us.

According to this principle the Prophet now says, that the *days would come in which God would raise up to David a righteous branch.* He had spoken generally of pastors; but the Jews might have still been in doubt, and hesitated to

believe that any such thing could be hoped for; hence God calls here their attention to the Messiah; as though he had said, that no hope of salvation could be entertained except through the Mediator who had been promised to them, and that therefore they were not sufficiently wise except they turned their minds to him. Moreover, as the accomplishment of salvation was to be expected through the Mediator, God shews that the promise, that he would give them pastors, ought not to be doubted. Hence it appears that I rightly stated at the beginning, that the former doctrine is confirmed by this passage in which God promises the coming of the Mediator. And the demonstrative particle, *behold*, as we have elsewhere seen, is intended to shew certainty; and it was necessary for the Jews to be thus confirmed, because the time had not as yet arrived, and we know that their faith must have been grievously shaken by so many and so long trials, had they not some support. God, then, seems to point out the event as by the finger, though it was as yet very remote. He does not intimate a short time, but he thus speaks for the sake of making the thing certain, so that they might not faint through a long expectation. *Come*, then, he says, *shall the days in which he will raise up to David a righteous branch.*

Though the preposition ל, *lamed*, is often redundant, yet in this place it seems to me that God has a reference to the covenant which he had made with David. And the Prophet did this designedly, because the Jews were unworthy of being at all regarded by God; but he here promises that he would be faithful to that covenant which he had once made with David, because David himself was also faithful and embraced with true faith the promise made to him. God then, as though he would have nothing to do with that perverse and irreclaimable people, but with his servant David, says, "I will raise up to David a righteous branch;" as though he had said, "Though ye were even a hundred times unworthy of having a Deliverer, yet the memory of David shall ever remain complete with me, as he was perfect and faithful in keeping my covenant." Now, it cannot be doubted but that the Prophet speaks here of Christ.

The Jews, in order to obscure this prophecy, will have this to be applied to all the descendants of David; and thus they imagine an earthly kingdom, such as it was under Solomon and others. But such a thing cannot certainly be gathered from the words of the Prophet; for he does not speak here of many kings, but of one only. The word "branch," I allow, may be taken in a collective sense; but what is afterwards said? *A king shall reign.* They may also pervert this, for the word "king" is often taken for successors in a kingdom. This is indeed true; but we ought to consider the whole context. It is said, *in his days.* Hence it appears evident that some particular king is intended, and that the words ought not to be applied to many. And the last clause is a further confirmation, *This shall be his name, by which they shall call him, Jehovah our righteousness.* Here also the Jews pervert the words, for they make God the nominative case to the verb, as though the words were, "Jehovah shall call him our righteousness;" but this is contrary to all reason, for all must see that it is a forced and strained version. Thus these miserable men betray their own perverseness; for they pervert, without any shame, all the testimonies in favour of Christ; and they think it enough to elude whatever presses hard on them.

We must now, then, understand that this passage cannot be explained of any but of Christ only. The design of the Holy Spirit we have already explained; God had from the beginning introduced this pledge whenever he intended to confirm faith in his promises; for without Christ God cannot be a Father and a Saviour to men; nor could he have been reconciled to the Jews, because they had departed from him. How, indeed, could they have been received into favour without expiation? and how could they have hoped that God would become a Father to them, except they were reconciled to him? Hence without Christ they could not rely on the promises of salvation. Rightly, then, have I said, that this passage ought to be confined to the person of Christ.

And we know of a certainty that he alone was a righteous branch; for though Hezekiah and Josiah were lawful suc-

cessors, yet when we think of others, we must say, that they were monsters. Doubtless, with the exception of three or four, they were all spurious and covenant-breakers; yea, I say, spurious, for they had nothing in common with David, whom they ought to have taken as an example of piety. Since, then, they were wholly unlike their father David, they could not have been called righteous branches. They were, indeed, perfidious and apostates, for they had departed from God and his law. We hence see that there is here an implied contrast between Christ and all those spurious children who yet had descended from David, though wholly unworthy of such an honour on account of their impiety. Therefore as these kings had roused God's wrath against the people, and had been the cause of their exile, the Prophet says now, that there would be at length a *righteous branch*;[1] that is, that though those did all they could to subvert God's covenant by their wicked deeds, there would come at length the true and the only Son, who is elsewhere called the *first-born* in the whole world, (Psalm lxxxix. 27,) and that he would be a righteous branch.

And this ought to be carefully noticed; for neither Hezekiah nor Josiah, nor any like them, when viewed in themselves, were worthy of this sacred distinction, "I will make him the first-born in the earth;" and further, "My Son art thou." (Psalm ii. 7.) This could not have been said of any mortal man, viewed in himself. And then it is said, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;" and the Apostle tells us, that this cannot be applied even to angels. (Heb. i. 5.) As, then, this dignity is higher than angels' glory, it is certain that none of David's successors were worthy of such an honour. Hence Christ is justly called a righteous Branch. At the same time, the Prophet, as I have already reminded you, seems to set the perfect integrity of Christ in opposition to the impiety of those who under a false pretence had exercised authority, as though they were

[1] The *Sept.* and *Arab.* give, "a righteous sun-rising—ἀνατολὴν δικαίαν;" the *Vulg.*, "a righteous branch;" the *Syr.*, "a ray of righteousness." The *Vulg.* is alone correct, as there can be no doubt as to the original words. —*Ed.*

of that sacred race of whom it had been said, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."

It follows,—*And reign shall a king.* This also has not been added without reason, shortly after Jeconiah had been driven into exile, and also the whole royal family had been exposed to every kind of reproach. The crown, indeed, was cast on the ground, as it has already appeared, and was trodden under feet. There was, therefore, no hope of a future kingdom when the seed of Abraham had become, as it were, extinct. This is the reason why God promises what we now hear of the restoration of the throne; and we may easily infer from what all the prophets have said, that the salvation of the people was dependent on the person of their king; and whenever God bade the people to entertain hope, he set a king before their eyes. A king was to be their head under God's government. We now see the design of the Prophet in saying, that a *king would reign.*

Some think that a king is to be understood as in opposition to a tyrant, because many kings had departed from their duty, and committed robbery under that specious authority. I have no doubt but that the word king was expressed, lest the people should doubt the fulfilment of this prophecy; for if it had been only said, "I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign," they might, indeed, have entertained some hope, but it would have been small, and not full and complete. We, indeed, know that Zerubbabel and others excelled in some things, and were highly regarded for David's sake; but there was then no kingdom. God therefore intended here expressly to testify that there would be the high privilege of a kingdom, that there might be nothing wanting to the Jews, as the power of Christ would not be inferior to the power of David. *Reign*, then, *shall a king;* that is, he shall reign gloriously, so that there would not be merely some remnants of pristine dignity, but that a king would flourish, become strong, and attain perfection, such as it was under David and Solomon, and much more excellent.[1]

[1] We cannot express the words in our language without changing the terms as follows, "And a ruler shall rule," or, "a reigner shall reign."

It follows,—*And shall act prudently, and shall do judgment and justice in the land;* or, "he shall prosper," for שכל, *shecal*, means both; yet the Prophet seems here to speak of right judgment rather than of success, for the two clauses ought to be read together, "he shall act prudently," and "he shall do judgment and justice." It seems then that he means this in short,—that Christ would be endued with the spirit of wisdom as well as of uprightness and equity, so that he would possess all the qualifications, and fulfil all the duties of a good and perfect king.[1]

And in the first place, wisdom or prudence is necessary; for probity alone would not be sufficient in a king. In private individuals indeed it is of no small value; but probity in a king, without wisdom, will avail but little. Hence, the Prophet here commends Christ for his good discernment, and then mentions his zeal for equity and justice. It is indeed true that Christ's excellences are not sufficiently set forth by expressions such as these; but the similitude is taken from men; for the first endowment of a king is wisdom, and then integrity in the second place. And we know that Christ is often compared to earthly kings, or set forth to us under the image of an earthly king, in which we may see him; for God accommodates himself to our ignorance. As, then, we cannot comprehend the unspeakable justice of Christ or his wisdom, hence God, that he may by degrees lead us to the knowledge of Christ, shadows him forth to us under these figures or types. Though, then, what is said

Bochart says that this double use of the same word, as a substantive and a verb, imports in Hebrew what is enhancive, according to what *Calvin* says here. The king was to be a king indeed, with full power and dignity, and with a large extent of empire.

The *Welsh* will express the words literally,—

A breniniaetha brenin.

And so it is rendered in Greek,—

Καὶ βασιλεύσει βασιλεὺς.—*Ed.*

[1] The verb שכל first means to be wise or prudent, and in Hiphil, as here, to understand, to act wisely or prudently; and secondly, as the natural effect of wisdom, it means sometimes to prosper. But the first sense is given to it here by all the Versions; "and shall understand," is the *Septuagint;* "and shall be wise," the *Vulgate;* "and shall act prudently," the *Syriac.* Our version is the *Targum.* *Blayney* gives the same idea with *Calvin*, "and shall act wisely;" which is no doubt the correct one.—*Ed.*

here does not come up to the perfection of Christ, yet the comparison ought not to be deemed improper; for God speaks to us according to the measure of our capacities, and could not at once in a few words fully express what Christ is. But we must bear in mind that from earthly kings we must ascend to Christ; for though he is compared to them, yet there is no equality; after having contemplated in the type what our minds can comprehend, we ought to ascend farther and much higher.

Hence, the difference between the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of kings ought to be here noticed. They who rule well can in no other way administer righteousness and judgment than by being careful to render to every one his own, and that by checking the audacity of the wicked, and by defending the good and the innocent; this only is what can be expected from earthly kings. But Christ is far different; for he is not only wise so as to know what is right and best, but he also endues his own people with wisdom and knowledge; he executes judgment and righteousness, not only because he defends the innocent, aids them who are oppressed, gives help to the miserable, and restrains the wicked; but he *doeth righteousness*, because he regenerates us by his Spirit, and he also *doeth judgment*, because he bridles, as it were, the devil. We now then understand the design of what I said, that we ought to mark the transcendency of Christ over earthly kings, and also the analogy; for there is some likeness and some difference: the difference between Christ and other kings is very great, and yet there is a likeness in some things; and earthly kings are set forth to us as figures and types of him.

It then follows, that *Judah shall be saved* in the days of this king. By *days* we are not to understand the life only of Christ, which he lived in this world, but that perpetuity of which Isaiah speaks, when in wonder he asks, "His age who shall declare?" (Is. liii. 8;) for he died once, that he might live to God, according to what Paul says. (Rom. vi. 10.) It was then but a short beginning of life when Christ was manifested in the world, and held converse with men; but his life is to continue for ever. It is then the same thing

as though the Prophet had said, that when Christ came and descended from the Father, the Church would be saved.

If it be now asked, "How long shall it be saved?" the answer is, "As long as the King himself shall continue; and there is no end to his kingdom." It follows then that the salvation of the Church will be for ever. This is the import of the whole.

Now, though the Prophet speaks of the deliverance of the people, there is yet no doubt but that he especially sets forth what properly belongs to the kingdom of Christ. He is set over us as a king, that he might be our Saviour; and his salvation, though it extends to our bodies, ought yet to be viewed as properly belonging to our souls; for the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and so is everything connected with it. Hence, when the Prophet says that *saved would be Judah*, it is the same thing as though he promised that the happiness of the Church would be real and solid under Christ.

He adds, *Israel shall dwell in confidence;* for in a happy life the first thing is, that we possess tranquil and quiet minds; for tranquillity has not been without reason commended by the ancients. When all things which men covet are heaped together, and what they think necessary for happiness, they yet cannot be otherwise than miserable if their minds are not in a right state. It is not then without cause that tranquillity is added, when mention is made of salvation. And experience itself teaches us, that we have no salvation, unless we, relying on Christ the Mediator, have peace with God, as Paul also mentions it as the fruit of faith, and shews that we cannot otherwise but be always miserable: we have peace, he says, with God. (Rom. v. 1.) He hence also concludes that our very miseries are a help to our salvation; for afflictions prove patience, patience exercises hope, and hope never makes us ashamed; and the proof of this is added, because God thus really shews that he is present with us.

We hence see how fitly the Prophet connects tranquillity of mind with happiness. Moreover it is certain that we do not yet enjoy either salvation or peace, such as are here pro-

mised; but let us learn by faith what salvation is, and also what is rest even in the midst of the agitations to which we are continually exposed; for we recumb on God when we cast our anchor in heaven. Since, then, the Prophet says here that Judah would be saved and that Israel would be in a tranquil state, let us know that he includes the whole kingdom of Christ from the beginning to the end, and that therefore it is no wonder that he speaks of that perfect happiness, the first fruits of which now only appear.

He then adds, *And this is the name by which they shall call him, Jehovah our Righteousness.* By these words the Prophet shews more clearly that he speaks not generally of David's posterity, however excellent they may have been, but of the Mediator, who had been promised, and on whom depended the salvation of the people; for he says that this would be his name, *Jehovah our Righteousness.*[1]

Those Jews, who seem more modest than others, and dare not, through a dogged pertinacity, to corrupt this passage, do yet elude the application of this title to Christ, though it be suitable to him; for they say that the name is given to him, because he is the minister of God's justice, as though it was said, that whenever this king appeared all would acknowledge God's justice as shining forth in him. And they adduce other similar passages, as when Moses calls the altar, "Jehovah my banner," or my protection. (Ex. xvii. 15.) But there is no likeness whatever between an altar and Christ. For the same purpose they refer to another passage, where it is said, "And this is the name by which they shall call Jerusalem, Jehovah our peace." (Ezek. xlviii. 35.) Now Moses meant nothing else than that the altar was a monument of God's protection; and Ezekiel only teaches, that the Church would be as it were a mirror in which God's mercy would be seen, as it would shine forth then, as it were, visibly. But this cannot for the same reason be applied to Christ; he is set forth here as a Redeemer, and a name is given to him,—what name? the name of God. But the Jews object and say, that he was God's minister, and that it might therefore be in

[1] See the Preface to this volume.

a sense applied to him, though he was no more than a man.

But all who without strife and prejudice judge of things, can easily see that this name is suitably applied to Christ, as he is God; and the Son of David belongs to him as he is man. The Son of David and Jehovah is one and the same Redeemer. Why is he called the Son of David? even because it was necessary that he should be born of that family. Why then is he called Jehovah? we hence conclude that there is something in him more excellent than what is human; and he is called Jehovah, because he is the only-begotten Son of God, of one and the same essence, glory, eternity, and divinity with the Father.

It hence appears evident to all who judge impartially and considerately, that Christ is set forth here in his twofold character, so that the Prophet brings before us both, the glory of his divinity and the reality of his humanity. And we know how necessary it was that Christ should come forth as God and man; for salvation cannot be expected in any other way than from God; and Christ must confer salvation on us, and not only be its minister. And then, as he is God, he justifies us, regenerates us, illuminates us into a hope of eternal life; to conquer sin and death is doubtless what only can be effected by divine power. Hence Christ, except he was God, could not have performed what we had to expect from him. It was also necessary that he should become man, that he might unite us to himself; for we have no access to God, except we become the friends of Christ; and how can we be so made, except by a brotherly union? It was not then without the strongest reason, that the Prophet here sets Christ before us both as a true man and the Son of David, and also as God or Jehovah, for he is the only-begotten Son of God, and ever the same in wisdom and glory with the Father, as John testifies in chap. xvii. 5, 11.

We now then perceive the simple and real meaning of this passage, even that God would restore his Church, because what he had promised respecting a Redeemer stood firm and inviolable. Then he adds what this Redeemer would be and what was to be expected from him; he declares that he

would be the true God and yet the Son of David; and he also bids us to expect righteousness from him, and everything necessary to a full and perfect happiness.

But by saying, God *our righteousness*, the Prophet still more fully shews that righteousness is not in Christ as though it were only his own, but that we have it in common with him, for he has nothing separate from us. God, indeed, must ever be deemed just, though iniquity prevailed through the whole world; and men, were they all wicked, could do nothing to impugn or mar the righteousness of God. But yet God is not our righteousness as he is righteous in himself, or as having his own peculiar righteousness; and as he is our judge, his own righteousness is adverse to us. But Christ's righteousness is of another kind: it is ours, because Christ is righteous not for himself, but possesses a righteousness which he communicates to us. We hence see that the true character of Christ is here set forth, not that he would come to manifest divine justice, but to bring righteousness, which would avail to the salvation of men. For if we regard God in himself, as I have said, he is indeed righteous, but is not our righteousness. If, then, we desire to have God as our righteousness, we must seek Christ; for this cannot be found except in him. The righteousness of God has been set forth to us in Christ; and all who turn away from him, though they may take many circuitous courses, can yet never find the righteousness of God. Hence Paul says that he has been given or made to us righteousness,—for what end? that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (1 Cor. i. 30.) Since, then, Christ is made our righteousness, and we are counted the righteousness of God in him, we hence learn how properly and fitly it has been said that he would be *Jehovah*, not only that the power of his divinity might defend us, but also that we might become righteous in him, for he is not only righteous for himself, but he is our righteousness.[1]

[1] "This king," says *Venema*, "is the true God, the meritorious cause and pledge of our righteousness, and also the efficient cause and exemplar of all holiness, piety, and virtue." He holds that Messiah alone is spoken of here, and blames *Grotius* for applying the passage in the first place to Zerubbabel, and maintains that what is said here cannot be applied to any

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that we, having been all slaves to sin and to iniquity, but regenerated by the Spirit of thy only-begotten Son, may truly and with sincere desire seek to serve and worship thee alone, and so consecrate ourselves to thee, that it may appear that we do not falsely profess the name of Christ, but that we are truly his members, being partakers of that new life which he brought us; and may we make such progress in it, that, having finished our course on earth, we may at length come to that fulness of life and happiness which has been procured for us by him, and which is laid up in heaven for us.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Sixth.

7. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

8. But, the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

7. Propterea ecce dies veniunt, (venient,) dicit Jehova, quibus non dicetur (*ad verbum*, et non dicetur,—non dicent) amplius, Vivit Jehova, qui eduxit filios Israel e terra Egypti;

8. Quin potius, Vivit Jehova, qui eduxit et adduxit (ascendere fecit et introduxit, *ad verbum*) semen domus Israel e terra Aquilonis, et ex omnibus terris, ad quas expuleram eos illuc; et habitabunt super terram suam.[1]

The Prophet, after having spoken of the Redeemer who was to be sent, now sets forth in high terms that great favour of God, and says that it would be so remarkable and glorious, that the former redemption would be nothing to the greatness and excellency of this. When the children of Israel were brought up out of Egypt, God, we know, testified his power by many miracles, in order that this favour towards his people might appear the more illustrious; and rightly did the Prophets exhort and encourage the faithful to entertain good hope by calling to their minds what was then done. But our Prophet enhances the second redemp-

but to the Messiah. He mentions, as a proof of this, his name—"a righteous Branch;" his royal dignity—"a king shall reign;" his title—"Jehovah our righteousness," his prosperity and the security of his kingdom. All these things comport with the character of no one, but with that of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Ed.*

[1] These two verses are omitted here in the *Sept.* and *Arab.*, but are given at the end of the chapter.—*Ed.*

tion by this comparison, that hereafter the kindness of God, with which he favoured his people when he delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, would not be remembered, but that something more remarkable would be done, so that all would talk of it, and that all would proclaim the immense benefit which God would confer on them in delivering them from their exile in Babylon.[1]

He then says that the *days* would *come in which* it would *not be said, Live does Jehovah,* who brought his people *from Egypt,* but who brought his people *from the land of the North.*[2] Yet he does not mean that the memory of God's favour towards the Israelites, when he brought them from Egypt, was to be abolished; but he reasons here from the less to the greater, as though he had said that it was an evidence of God's favour that could not be sufficiently praised, when he delivered his people from the land of Egypt, that if it were taken by itself, it was worthy of being for ever remembered; but that when compared with the second deliverance it would appear almost as nothing. The meaning is, that the second redemption would be so much more remarkable than the first, that it would obscure the remembrance of it, though it would not obliterate it.

And this passage deserves to be especially noticed, for we hence learn how much we ought to value that redemption which we have obtained through the only-begotten Son of God. And hence, also, it follows that we are more bound

[1] It is a fact worthy of being observed, that what God effected in the course of his providence was more remarkable, and is represented as more astonishing, than what he did by means of many and wonderful miracles: the secret working of his providence on the minds of men is more wonderful and effects greater things than his power when put forth to reverse the course of nature. Though he performs no miracles now, yet he works in a way more wonderful than if he did. We cannot but see this if we notice the course of events with enlightened eyes.—*Ed.*

[2] The verse begins with לָכֵן, rendered "therefore," or, "on this account," by the *Vulg.*, the *Syr.*, and by our own version; but, "after this," by *Blayney*, and "moreover," by *Gataker*. It might be rendered "surely," or doubtless, as it is by *Venema*,—

Surely, behold the days *are* coming, saith Jehovah,
When they shall no more say, Jehovah lives, &c.

It is better to render the ו, "when," than "that," as in our version. The *Sept.* and *Vulg.* render it "and," which gives no meaning in either language. *Calvin* follows the *Syr.*, and gives the sense, "in which."—*Ed.*

to God than the Fathers under the Law, as he has dealt far more bountifully with us, and has put forth his power more fully and effectually in our behalf. We further learn, that the Prophet does not in this prophecy include a few years only, but the whole kingdom of Christ and its whole progress. He indeed speaks of the return of the people to their own country, and this ought to be allowed, though Christians have been too rigid in this respect; for passing by the whole intermediate time between the return of the people and the coming of Christ, they have too violently turned the prophecies to spiritual redemption. There is no doubt but that the Prophet makes a beginning with the free return of the people from captivity; but, as I have said, Christ's redemption is not to be separated from this, otherwise the accomplishment of the promise would not appear to us, for a small portion only returned to their own land. We also know that they were harassed with many and continual troubles, so that their condition was always miserable, for nothing is worse than a state of disquietude. We know further, that they were spoiled, and that often, and were also reduced to a state of bondage. We know how cruelly they were treated at one time by the Egyptians, and at another by the kings of Syria. Then more was promised by Jeremiah than what God has really performed, except we include in this prophecy the kingdom of Christ. But as God so restored his Church by the hand of Cyrus, that it might be a kind of prelude to a future and perfect redemption, it is no wonder that the prophets, whenever they spoke of the people's return and of the end of their exile, should look forward to Christ and to his spiritual kingdom.

We now, then, see the design of the Prophet, when he says that the days would come in which their first redemption would not be spoken of by the people, as a remarkable or as the chief evidence of God's favour and power, as their second redemption would far exceed it.

As to the formula or manner of speaking, *Live does Jehovah*, we know that the ancients used such words in making a solemn oath, and whenever they sought to animate themselves with hope under adversities. Whenever, then, they

found themselves so pressed down that they had no other escape from evil than through God's favour, they usually said that the God who had formerly been the Redeemer of his people still lived, and that there was no diminution of his power, so that he could ten times, or a hundred times, or a thousand times, if necessary, bring help to his Church and to every member of it.

He says, *from all the lands to which I shall have driven them*, and he says this for two reasons, which we shall presently state. The change of person does not obscure the meaning: *Live*, he says, *does Jehovah, who brought out and led his people from the land of the north, and from all the lands to which I had driven them;* but there is no ambiguity in the sense.

As to the subject itself, it seems that God in the first place intended to remind the Jews of their sins, as this knowledge was to be the way to repentance, or a preparation for it. For except they were convinced that they were chastised for their sins by God's hand, they would either have thought that their exile was by chance, or have given way to murmuring complaints as they often did. But God here declares that he was the author of their exile, in order that the Jews might know that God justly punished them for their many and grievous sins. But God, in the second place, shews that it was in his power, whenever he pleased, to restore those whom he had afflicted. It was the same as to raise from death those whom he had slain, according to what is said elsewhere, "God is he who kills, and who brings to life." (1 Sam. ii. 6.) Many indeed can destroy, but they cannot heal the wound which they may have made. But with regard to God, he is both a righteous Judge and a merciful Saviour. As, then, death is in his power whenever he punishes men for their wickedness, so also he has life in his hand and at his bidding, whenever he intends to shew mercy. We now, then, perceive what the Prophet had in view in saying that the Jews had been driven away by God.

He afterwards adds, *They shall dwell in their own land.* It was necessary that the Jews should have been sustained by this support until the coming of Christ, for they saw that

they would be in that inheritance which had been promised to the fathers as a pledge of eternal life and of the heavenly kingdom. It now follows,—

9. Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake: I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness.

9. Propter prophetas (alii, ad prophetas, *et potest legi ita ad verbum*) contritum est (*vel*, confractum est) cor meum in medio mei: commota sunt (*vel*, concussa) omnia ossa mea (*proprie*, luxata sunt, *quia de ossibus agitur: quantum ad verbum spectat, significat agitari, et moveri: sed quoniam nunc loquitur de ossibus, sermo erit aptior*, luxata esse ossa:) fui tanquam vir ebrius super quem transiit vinum (*hoc est* tanquam vir obrutus vino) a facie Jehovæ, et a facie sermonum sanctitatis ejus.

The Prophet here again inveighs against the wickedness of the people; but as the prophets by their flatteries had then led astray the king and his princes, as well as the people, the Prophet directed his discourse to them, and says that his *heart* was troubled *on account of the prophets*. We know that men think themselves half absolved when no one severely reproves them. When, therefore, the prophets ceased from their work, there was so great a security among the whole people, that there was no fear of God in them. This is the reason why the Prophet now says that his heart was troubled on account of so much indifference; for the prophets were, as it is said elsewhere, like dumb dogs; they overlooked the most grievous and the most atrocious sins, they made no effort to restore the people to the right way. *Troubled*, then, he says, is *my heart for the prophets;* a heavier judgment awaited them, for they ought to have been the instruments of God's Spirit, the heralds of his judgments; they ought to have undertaken his cause by using exhortations, reproofs, and threatenings.

There is yet no doubt but that what is said ought to be extended to the whole body of the people. But Jeremiah wished to begin with the prophets, as though he had said that it was monstrous that the prophets boasted that they were God's ministers, and yet were dumb in the midst of so much wickedness. *On account of the prophets*,[1] he says,

[1] These words are connected with the former verse in the *Sept.* where they seem to have no meaning. The *Vulg.* puts them as a heading to what follows, and *Blayney* has done the same, "concerning the prophets."

broken is my heart. Then he says that his *bones* were disjointed. In the first chapter of Genesis, when Moses speaks of the Spirit as moving on the waters, he uses the same verb, but in a different conjugation. However this may be, it is most suitable to say that his bones were disjointed.[1] And we know that the bones are tied together by sinews, that they may not be moved from their places; for the loosening of one bone renders the whole body almost useless. He meant, then, by this kind of speaking, to express the most painful perturbation of mind, as though he had said that what he had, as the firmest and strongest thing, was become weak and altogether feeble.

He afterwards compares himself to a drunken man; by which metaphor he understands that he was completely stunned, and that all his senses were taken from him. And he adds, *over whom wine has passed.* The verb עָבַר, *ober*, means to pass beyond; but to pass over is its meaning here. He who is overcome by immoderate drinking seems as though he was drowned; for when one falls under the water, he is no more sunk than he who drowns his brain with wine; for drunkenness is like a grave, inasmuch as it holds the whole man under its power. Yet the Prophet meant no other thing than that this monstrous thing rendered those astonied who were of a sane and sound mind, and that it also shook and disjointed all the members, and terrified and confounded minds otherwise quiet and tranquil. For, certainly, Jeremiah was a wise man, and was also endued with courage, so that he would not have quailed under every evil though great; nor could he have been easily overwhelmed with stupor like a drunken man. Hence by these comparisons he shews how dreadful and monstrous it was, that the prophets were so unconcerned as not to say a word, when they

The *Syr.* connects them with the following words, as *Calvin* does, and our version, and also the *Arab.* and *Targ.* The most suitable rendering would be,—

For the prophets broken is my heart within me.

The sentence is otherwise hardly complete. It may be rendered "with regard to the prophets," &c.—*Ed.*

[1] The idea of shaking or trembling is commonly given here to the verb: "are shaken," *Sept.;* "have trembled," *Vulg.*, *Syr.*, and *Targ.* The word "tremble" is the most suitable.—*Ed.*

saw that impiety and contempt of God were so rampant, when they saw the whole land defiled with every kind of wickedness, as we shall presently see.

Then he says, *On account of Jehovah, and on account of the words of his holiness.* By saying, *on account of Jehovah,* he brings God before them as a judge and avenger; as though he had said, "If they believe that there is a God in heaven, it is a wonder that they are so brutish as to dare to boast of his name, and yet silently to allow heaven and earth to be mingled together. Where, then, is their reason, when they dare so heedlessly to profess a name so fearful and awful? for whenever God's name is mentioned, there ought to come into their minds not only his goodness and mercy, but also his severity, and then his power, which is dreadful to all the wicked. As then these men dare thus to trifle with God, must not their stupidity be monstrous?" What, then, the Prophet means is this,—that it was a wonder that the prophets undertook their office, and yet had no concern for the glory of God.

And he adds, *On account of the words of his holiness.* Men would seek easiness were not God to rouse them by his word. But as the Law had been written for the Jews, as these false prophets knew that if they wished rightly to perform their work, they ought to have been the expounders of the Law—as these things were sufficiently known, the Prophet justly refers here to the word of God, as though he would put a bridle in their mouths, lest they should, after their usual manner, evade what a bare profession of God's name implied. Since, then, God had testified in his Law how he would have his people ruled, how was it that these prophets were not terrified by God's words? And as hypocrites not only despise God himself, and depreciate his glory, but also disregard the doctrine of his law, the Prophet adorns God's words with a remarkable encomium, calling his words the words of *his holiness.* And he thus calls God's words holy, and therefore inviolable, in order that the ungodly might know, that a dreadful vengeance was nigh them, because they disregarded both God and his holy words. It follows—

10. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force *is* not right.

10. Quia adulteriis referta est terra, quia a facie jurisjurandi (*vel*, perfidiæ) luxit terra, aruerunt speciosa deserti (*vel*, caulæ deserti; *nam pluribus modis vertunt;*) et fuit cursus eorum malus, et robur eorum non rectum.

Jeremiah now assigns the reason why he was so much horrified by the insensibility which he observed in the prophets. If things were in good order, or if, at least, they were tolerable, the prophets would have more calmly addressed the Jews; for what need is there to make a great ado when men willingly follow what God commands? When, therefore, we have to do with meek and modest men, vehemence is foolish; and they who thus bestir themselves, and seek, through great ambition, to shew very fervid zeal when there is no need, are nothing but apes; but when things are in disorder and confusion, then vehemence is wanted. Jeremiah now declares that things were so extremely out of order, that the prophets could not have been silent, except they were like logs of wood.

These two things, then, ought to be connected together, —that the prophets were dumb,—and that they were dumb when there was the greatest necessity for speaking; for they saw the land filled with adulteries. Though he names adulterers, he yet condemns the crime. As then the land was polluted by adulteries and perjuries, as they all gave themselves up to do evil, it was by no means to be tolerated that the prophets should not be indignant, as though things were well ordered and peaceable.

We hence see how much God abhors sloth in the ministers of his word, in those whom he appoints as teachers in his Church, while they connive at wickedness, and heedlessly pass by adulteries, and fornications, and perjuries, and frauds, and other kinds of wrongs; for if there were even the least particle of religion in their hearts, they would certainly have been moved, and could not have been for a moment silent. For if that zeal ought to be in all God's children, which was in the Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house has consumed me, and the reproaches of them who reproached thee have fallen upon me," (Psalm lxix. 10,) how inexcusable must be the

indifference of prophets, when they see God's name exposed to mockery, and when they see every kind of wickedness prevailing? We now see not only what the Prophet teaches in this passage, but also the usefulness of his doctrine and how it ought to be applied. Let us then learn, that the more liberty men take in sinning, and the more audaciously their impiety and contempt of God break out, the more sharply ought prophets and faithful teachers to reprove and condemn them; and that it is the time of fighting, when the world thus presumptuously and furiously rise up against God.

The Prophet mentions some kinds of evil, and yet does not enumerate all kinds; but under adulteries and perjuries he includes also other crimes. As to the word אָלָה, *ale*, it properly means swearing; but as cursing often accompanies it, some render it here "execration."[1] But I rather think that what is meant is perjury, and that swearing here is taken in a bad sense, signifying swearing falsely in the name of God.

Mourned, he says, *has the land, and dried up have the pas-*

[1] The early Versions and the *Targum* differ as to this word: the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Arab.* have "on account of these," that is, adulterers; the *Vulg.*, "on account of a curse," that is of God; the *Targ.*, "on account of false swearing." *Blayney* says, that there is nothing here about swearing, and renders the words "because of these:" but the 14th verse decides the question, where we have "adultery" and "walking in lies," ascribed to the same persons, the prophets. That אָלָה means sometimes "false swearing," is evident from Hosea iv. 2; and in Hosea x. 4, we have the word "falsely" added to it. Their false swearing was their unfaithfulness to God's covenant, their apostasy in worshipping idols. And the charge of being "adulterers" seems to refer to their spiritual adultery—their idolatry, and not as *Calvin* and others think, to that which is natural. Everything in the context favours this view; their wickedness was found in God's house, verse 11; and a comparison is made between them and the Samaritan prophets, verse 14. The construction of this verse leads us to the same conclusion: when two כִּי occur in succession, as here, they may be rendered *as* and *so*,—

As the land has been filled with adulterers,
So for false swearing has the land mourned,
Withered have the pastures of the wilderness;
And their course has become calamitous,
And their strength not firm, (that is, to run their course.)

Houbigant and *Horsley* have re-arranged the whole verse, and made several transpositions. Had these learned men for a moment reflected how such delocations of words, as they suppose, *could* have taken place, they would have, no doubt, restrained their innovating propensities.—*Ed.*

tures of the desert. Here the Prophet strikingly shews how shameful was that torpor of which he speaks, for the land itself cried out, and not only the land which was cultivated and had on it many men, but also the very mountains and their recesses. He says that the land was in mourning, because God shewed his judgments everywhere by rendering the fields barren, and by other means which he used as punishments. And it is a very striking mode of speaking, when the Prophet mentions the mourning of the land, as though it assumed the character of a mourner, when it saw God angry on account of the wickedness of men. It is, indeed, a kind of personification, though he does not introduce the land as speaking; but he describes mourning as it appeared in the sterility of the land, and also in hails and storms, in unseasonable rains, in droughts, and in other calamities.

Whenever then God raises his hand to punish men for their sins, if they themselves perceive it not, the very land, which is without sense and feeling, ought to fill them with shame for their madness; for mourning appears in the very land, as though it knew that God was displeased with it. When, therefore, men sleep in their sins, and thus disregard God's vengeance, how monstrous must be their torpor! And if this be intolerable in the common people, what can be said of the prophets, who ought to proclaim such words as these,—"Cursed is he who has transgressed the precepts of this law"—"cursed is he who has corrupted the worship of God"—or, "who hath dealt unjustly with his neighbour,"—and whatever else the law contains? (Deut xxvii. 26; xxviii. 47, 58.) We now then perceive how emphatical are the words when the Prophet says, *Mourned has the land.*

And he amplifies the same thing by saying, *Dried up have the beautiful places of the desert;* as though he had said, that God's judgments were seen in the remotest places, not only in the plains, where the greater number of men dwelt, did the land mourn; but if any one ascended the mountains, where shepherds only with their flocks were to be found, even there the wrath of God was visible; and the very mountains cried out that God was angry; and yet men still deluded them-

selves, who, at the same time were expounders of the law, who were the mouth of God, and to whom he had committed the office of reproving; but they were dumb! We now understand what these words contain, and what is to be learnt from them.

He adds, that their *course* was *evil*,[1] and that their *strength* was *not right*. By *course* he no doubt means their doings and all their actions, and also the aid which they proposed to themselves; for our life is called a course, because God has not created us that we may lie down in one place, but he has set before us an end for which we are to live. Therefore, by course, the Scripture means all our doings, and the very end for which we are to live. He then says, that all their *strength* had been *perverted;* that is, that they had applied all their powers to do evil. It then hence appears that, except the prophets had been perfidious, they would have thought it full time to cry out, when men provoked God with so much audacity in their wicked courses. It follows—

11. For both prophet and priest are profane: yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.

11. Quia tam propheta quam sacerdos impia egerunt; etiam in domo mea deprehendi (*vel*, reperi) malitiam ipsorum, dicit Jehova.

He adds here that it ought not to appear strange that the prophets were silent when they ought to have loudly cried out, because they were guilty themselves: and whence can freedom of speech come except from a good conscience? Hypocrites, who indulge themselves, are indeed often severe against others, and even more than necessary; but no one can dare honestly to cry out against wickedness, but he who is innocent. For he who condemns others seems to make a law for himself, according to what a heathen writer has said, (*Cicero in Salustium.*) Then the Prophet here shews to us why the prophets were not only idle, but were even

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Their will also hath been wickedness,
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He derives it from רצה, to choose, and not from רוץ, run: but the sense of the last line is hardly discernible.—*Ed.*

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like stocks and stones; for in speaking against wickedness, it was necessary for them in the first place to amend themselves; for their lives were wholly dissolute. As then they were of all the most wicked, they could not boldly cry out against others; and hence the Prophet condemns them, because their own impiety prevented them to perform their own duty.

It is, indeed, possible for one to live soberly, honestly, and justly, and yet to connive at the wickedness of others; but the Prophet here condemns the prophets and priests on two accounts,—for being mute, and for not undertaking God's cause when they saw the land polluted with all kinds of defilements; and he then shews the fountain of this evil, that is, the cause why they were idle and wholly indifferent, and that was, because they dared not say a word against those crimes of which they were themselves guilty, yea, with which they were more loaded than even the common people. We now perceive the Prophet's object in saying that both the *priests* and the *prophets* had *acted impiously*;[1] it was to shew, that their contempt of God, for which they were notorious, and also their wickedness, had taken away from them all power and freedom in acting.

It is added, *Even in my house have I found their wickedness.* He enhances what he had said of their impiety; for they were not only infamous and wicked in common life, as to the duties of the Second Table; but they also corrupted the whole service of God, and the true Prophets were derided by them. For what was found to be the priests'

[1] This verb is used three times in chap. iii. ver. 1, 2, and 9, and in every instance in the sense of defiling the land with adultery, and in the two last verses, with spiritual adultery—idolatry. It is rendered here passively by the *Sept.* and the *Vulg.*, "have become defiled;" but it is most commonly used in a transitive sense; and so *Jun.* and *Trem.* render it here, and consider *it*, the land, as understood after it; and this is most consistent with the context,—

For both prophet and priest have defiled *it:*
Also in my house have I found
Their wickedness, saith Jehovah.

The "house" of God is here put in contrast with the land or the country; and in ver. 15, it is expressly said that from Jerusalem pollution had gone forth throughout all the land. Idolatry is evidently what is meant throughout this passage, from ver. 9 to 15. *Calvin* as to this verb has followed the *Syriac* version.—*Ed.*

wickédness in the Temple, except that they practised a sort of merchandise under the cover of the priesthood? and then the prophets vitiated and adulterated God's worship; and what was religion to them but the means of filthy lucre or gain? When, therefore, the prophets thus trod under foot the service of God, corrupted and perverted the Law to make gain or to acquire power, their impiety was not only seen in the habits of daily life, but also in the very Temple of God, that is, with regard to the sacerdotal office.

Now, since this is true as to what took place under the Law, there is no wonder that such a base example is to be seen in the present day. And hence also is discovered the folly of the Papists, who think that they ingeniously evade every objection as to the crimes of the Pope and his filthy clergy, by saying that the Pope indeed may be wicked, as almost all of them have been, and that the same thing may be said of their mitred bishops; but that the Pope, as a Pope, cannot err, and that the bishops, as bishops, that is, in their government and office, are ruled by the Holy Spirit, because they represent the Church. But are they better than these ancient priests, whom God himself had expressly appointed, and to whom he commanded obedience to be rendered by the whole people? But the Prophet not only says here that they were wicked, that they acted impiously and wickedly towards their neighbours, that they committed plunders and robberies, that they were given to violence and rapacity, that they abandoned themselves to adultery and to every other crime; but he says also, that their wickedness was found in the very Temple, that is, in the very sacred office itself; for not only was their life wicked, but they also impiously and perfidiously corrupted the doctrine of God and subverted his worship.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to set before us an example of every perfection in thine only-begotten Son, we may study to form ourselves in imitation of him, and so to follow not only what he has prescribed, but also what he really performed, that we may prove ourselves to be really his mem-

bers, and thus confirm our adoption; and may we so proceed in the whole course of our life, that we may at length be gathered into that blessed rest which the same, thine only-begotten Son, hath obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Seventh.

12. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery *ways* in the darkness; they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, *even* the year of their visitation, saith the Lord.

12. Propterea erit via eorum ipsis tanquam lubricitates, in caligine impingent, et cadent in ea; quia inducam super eos malum, annum visitationis eorum, dicit Jehova.

HERE he declares to false prophets and unfaithful priests that the Lord's judgment was nigh at hand, because they had deceived the people. But he speaks figuratively when he says, that their *way* would be to them *as lubricities*. By *way* he understands the means which they thought to be of the best kind, as elsewhere, nearly in the same sense, what is deemed delectable, or what conduces to sustain life, is called "the table" of the wicked. (Ps. lxix. 22.) The meaning then is, that when they thought all things prosperous, as if one made his way through a plain, they would find themselves on a slippery ground. *Their way*, then, would be to them as *lubricities*,[1] that is, when they seemed to take a safe counsel and so prudently to set all things in order, as that nothing could happen amiss to them, their way would

[1] Such is the word literally; but there is here an ellipsis, not uncommon in Hebrew; the word *way* is left out before "lubricities" or slipperinesses. The word being plural, and a reduplicate, expresses what is extreme—"most slippery," or, wholly slippery,—

12. Therefore their way shall be to them,
As *a way* wholly slippery in thick darkness;
They shall drive on and fall in it;
For I will bring on them an evil—
The year of their visitation, saith Jehovah.

It is not darkness, but thick darkness is what the word means; and it is connected with the previous words by the *Targ.* and by all the versions, except the *Syr.*; which *Blayney* has thus followed,—

Into darkness shall they be thrust and shall fall therein.

But this spoils the whole force of the passage: their way was to be altogether slippery, and also in thick darkness; along which they would be hurried on, or slide, or drive on, and the inevitable effect would be falling. —*Ed.*

become slippery, and that in darkness. He doubles the evil; for one may stand on a slippery ground, and yet may take care of himself on seeing danger; but when darkness is added to the slippery ground, he who can neither stand nor move can hardly do otherwise than fall, either on this or that side: hence he says, *they shall stumble and fall in it.*

The reason follows, even because the Lord was displeased with them. They could not then escape ruin, for they had to do with God. But as the ungodly derive false confidence from God's forbearance, so that they dare to glory in their wickedness, he adds, *the year of their visitation.* Though, then, God would not immediately put forth his hand to punish them, yet their time was to come; for the year of visitation means the suitable time which God has determined within himself. He indeed defers punishment; but when hypocrites and his despisers have long abused his forbearance, he then suddenly begins to thunder against them; and this is the year of visitation. It follows,—

13. And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

13. In prophetis (Et in prophetis) Samariæ vidi fatuitatem (*vel*, insulsum, *aut*, insulsitatem;) prophetant in Baal, et errare faciunt (*vel*, decipiunt) populum meum Israel.

14. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies; they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

14. Et in prophetis Jerusalem vidi pravitatem, adulterando et ambulando in fallacia; et roborant manus improborum, ut non revertantur quisque a malitia sua; facti sunt mihi omnes tanquam Sodoma, et habitatores ejus tanquam Gomorrha.

These two verses are to be read together; for there is no doubt but that the Prophet here compares the false prophets, who had corrupted God's worship in the kingdom of Israel, with those in Jerusalem who wished to appear more holy and more perfect. And he thus compares them that he might set forth those who sought to be deemed God's faithful ministers, as being by far the worst; for he says, that he had found *fatuity* in the prophets of Samaria, but *depravity* in the prophets of Jerusalem. They are therefore mistaken in my judgment who take also תפלה, *tephlah*, as meaning depravity; for they do not consider that he here

enhances by comparison their wickedness who thought themselves the best, as they say, without exception.

As to the prophets of Samaria, they had been long ago condemned; nor was there any at Jerusalem who dared openly to defend them; for they had departed from the worship of God, and had led away the people from the only true Temple and altar. They were then held at that time in the kingdom of Judah as apostates, perfidious, and unprincipled. But the kingdom of Judah still wished to be deemed pure and blameless; and the prophets, who were there, boasted that they were uncorrupt and free from every spot. The Prophet therefore says, that fatuity had been found in the prophets of Samaria, that is, in those who had corrupted the ten tribes, and vitiated there the pure worship of God; but that there was more wickedness in the prophets of Jerusalem and of the kingdom of Judah, because they were not only foolish, but also designedly subverted all religion, and allowed liberty in all kinds of wickedness, so that they carried as it were a banner in approbation of every species of iniquity. We hence see that the object of Jeremiah was to shew, that the prophets of the kingdom of Judah surpassed in impiety those very prophets whom they proudly condemned; for they were not only fatuitous and foolish, but had designedly as it were conspired against God, and had become open enemies not only to religion but to all laws.

As to the words, that he *found* fatuity[1] in the prophets of Samaria, he speaks in the person of God, who is the only fit judge. And he subjoins the cause of their senselessness, because *they prophesied by Baal, and made the people of Israel to go astray.* Had Jeremiah spoken only of these, he would no doubt have used stronger terms in describing their sin;

[1] Rendered "iniquities" by the *Sept.*; "fatuity" by the *Vulg.*; "falsehood" by the *Syr.*; and "impiety" by the *Targ.* *Blayney* has, "that which was disgusting." The word, as here, is found only in two other places, Job i. 22; xxiv. 12. It means, not what is "disgusting," but what is crude, insipid, untempered, and hence figuratively, what is unreasonable, absurd, fatuitous, foolish. It is rendered "folly" in Job. The *Vulg.*, which is followed by *Calvin*, gives its best meaning here—"fatuity." To prophesy by Baal was the effect of infatuation: it was an absurd and fatuitous thing. This was the character of the thing in itself; and the evil which this fatuity produced was to lead the people astray.—*Ed.*

but as he was contrasting them with those who were worse, he was satisfied with the word fatuity; as though he had said, "Were any one to consider them by themselves, they were indeed very wicked, and deserved the most severe punishment; but if they be compared with the prophets of Judah, then they must be deemed only fatuitous and sottish." Then the copulative is to be rendered thus, "I have, indeed, seen fatuity in the prophets of Samaria;" and then differently in the following clause, "but in the prophets of Judah I have seen depravity." It is to be read adversatively in this verse, and concessively in the former. Then *in the prophets of Jerusalem have I seen depravity.*[1]

It follows, *They commit adultery, and walk in deception.* Expositors think that there is a change of number; but what if these words be applied to the people? as though Jeremiah had said, "When any one is an adulterer, when any one walks in deception, that is, when any one is fraudu-

[1] Or "wickedness—*pravitatem*," rendered "horrible things" by the *Sept.*, and "folly" by the *Syr.* The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* go altogether astray. The word means properly horridness, hideousness, or a horrid thing, and may be rendered enormity. The difference found in the *Targ.* and the Versions, as to the word and the manner of rendering the words which follow, seems to shew that the passage was not understood. I offer the following version,—

14. But among the prophets of Jerusalem
Have I seen a horrid thing—
The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood;
And they have strengthened the hand of the wicked,
That they might not turn, each from his wickedness:
They are all of them become to me like Sodom,
And its inhabitants like *those* of Gomorrah.

The verb I render "the committing of adultery," is an infinitive without a preposition; it cannot be otherwise rendered in our language, but in *Welsh* it can be rendered literally, as an infinitive without a preposition, though commonly in that language, as in Hebrew, the infinitive mood has a preposition before it. The "horrid thing" was adultery, that is, idolatry, combined with "walking in falsehood," that is, with a false profession of prophesying in God's name, which is afterwards more distinctly specified. Here was the difference between the prophets: those of Samaria were idolaters, and consistently they prophesied in the name of Baal; but the prophets of Jerusalem were not only idolaters, but added to this sin the enormity of defending all they did by alleging that they were the Lord's prophets. This was the horrid thing. It is a great sin to advocate error, but to do this in the name of the Lord, or by perverting his word, is a horrid thing. The last line presents an instance of that ellipsis mentioned in a Note on the 12th verse. The word "inhabitants" is to be understood before Gomorrah.—*Ed.*

lent, *they strengthen the hands of the wicked.*" And, doubtless, this sense seems here to be the most correct. Then Jeremiah shews how they surpassed other prophets in impiety, even because they dissimulated when they saw on one hand adulteries prevailing, and on the other frauds, plunders, and perjuries; and not only so, but they undertook the patronizing of the wicked, and strengthened the hands of the ungodly, and added audacity to their madness. For as fear weakens the hands, so does shame; as, then, these prophets removed shame as well as fear from the wicked and ungodly, so they strengthened their hands; that is, they gave them more confidence, so that they rushed headlong into every evil more freely and with greater liberty.

That they might not return, he says, *every one from his wickedness.* This is added for the sake of explanation; for, as I have said, either the fear of God or shame from men might have checked their audacity; but when they were confirmed and countenanced, they broke out into all excesses, and hardened themselves in their obstinacy: *That they might not return, every one from his wickedness.*

In the last place he adds, *They shall be to me all of them as Sodom, and its inhabitants as Gomorrah.* We see that the last clause is confined to the citizens of Jerusalem. Then God says, that these prophets would be like the Sodomites, and the citizens of Jerusalem like the citizens of Gomorrah. This is not to be understood only as to crimes, but also as to punishment; as though he had said, that there was no more hope of pardon for them than for the Sodomites, for they had provoked to the utmost the wrath of God, so that he could not now spare them. It then follows,—

15. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

15. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum super (*vel,* ad) prophetas istos, Ecce ego cibabo eos amaritudine (*aut,* veneno; *alii vertunt,* absynthio, לַעֲנָה; *sed nomen absynthii non videtur quadrare; ubicumque enim ponitur hæc vox, significat amaritudinem noxiam et virulentem et mortiferam,*) et potabo eos aquis veneni (*alii vertunt,* fellis; *diximus alibi de hac voce,* רֹאשׁ;) quoniam a prophetis Jerusalem egressa est impietas in totam terram.

This verse is addressed to the prophets of the kingdom of Judah, as we learn from its conclusion; and thus the exposition which I have given is confirmed, even this, that God extenuates the fault of other prophets, in speaking of the prophets of Jerusalem, who boasted of greater sanctity. But he declares that they would have poison for meat and gall for drink; as though he had said, "I will pursue them with every kind of punishment." He expresses evidently the same thing I have before referred to, that their table would become a snare to them. (Ps. lxix. 22.) The ungodly, indeed, always think that they can by their arts escape; God on the other hand declares, that though they might have a table prepared, they yet would find nothing on it, but poison for meat, and gall for drink. For as to God's children and faithful servants, evils are turned to their benefit; so as to the ungodly and his wicked despisers, all things must necessarily turn out for their ruin, even meat and drink, and their course of life, and in a word everything.

The cause follows, *For gone forth is impiety*[1] *through the whole land from the prophets of Jerusalem.* By which words he declares that they were the authors of all evils, so that in comparison with them the prophets of Samaria might have been deemed in a manner righteous. But there is no doubt but that this declaration was considered too severe; yet we see by what necessity Jeremiah was constrained thus to speak; for the lamp of God as yet remained at Jerusalem, according to what is said in many passages, nor was the light of sound doctrine wholly put out. They professed that they continued to obey the Law; and at the same time they were much worse than others, for not only the worship of God in the Temple and in the city was corrupted, but adul-

[1] This is the *Syr.*, but it is not the meaning; it is properly rendered "pollution," or defilement, by the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and *Arab.*, but improperly "flattery," by the *Targ.* The verb from which it comes is commonly rendered to defile; see Is. xxiv. 5; Mic. iv. 11. The "profaneness" of our version, and "the perverseness" of *Blayney*, seem incorrect; the word is used in neither sense. The pollution here was by idolatry—the adultery beforementioned. This pollution had spread from Jerusalem through the whole land.—*Ed.*

teries, frauds, plunders, and all kinds of wickedness prevailed everywhere. He adds—

16. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the Lord.

16. Sic dicit Jehovah exercituum, Ne audiatis verba prophetarum, qui prophetant vobis; evanescere faciunt ipsi vobis, visionem cordis sui loquuntur, non ex ore Jehovæ.

What is here said must have appeared very severe, and must have grievously offended the people; for Jeremiah forbade them to hear the teaching of the prophets. He indeed concedes to them the name of prophets, which was a sacred name; but yet he discredits them, and deprives them of all dignity. He speaks not of magicians or impostors, who were aliens to God's people; he speaks not of Egyptians, or Chaldeans, or any like them, nor does he speak of the prophets of Samaria, but of those who daily appeared in the Temple and boasted that they were divinely chosen, endued with the spirit of revelation, and that they brought nothing but what God had committed to them. As then Jeremiah forbade them to hear these, some great perplexity must have necessarily seized the minds of all, especially of the simple,—"What does this mean? why does God suffer these unprincipled men to occupy a place in the Temple, and to exercise there the prophetic office, while at the same time they are cheats, perjurers, and impostors?"

In the same manner we see that many at this day are perplexed on account of the discords by which the Church is harassed, and as it were torn to pieces. We are constrained to contend with those who arrogate to themselves the name of the Catholic Church, who boast that they are bishops, vicars of Christ, successors of the Apostles. When therefore the ignorant see such hostile conflicts in the very bosom of the Church, they must necessarily be terrified, and such a stumbling-block shakes dreadfully their faith. Hence this passage ought to be especially noticed; for though at first ignorant people may be disturbed by such a prohibition as this, yet every one who really fears God will exercise his mind, so that he may distinguish between false and true prophets; and God will never leave his chosen people desti-

tute of the spirit of judgment and discernment, when teachers contend on both sides, and tumults nearly overthrow the Church; even then, as I have said, God will preserve his own elect, provided we piously and humbly strive to submit to his word; he will also guide us by his hand, so that we may not be deceived. Since then God had commanded Jeremiah to forbid the people to hear the false prophets, let us not at this day wonder, that faithful teachers who desire to maintain true doctrine and genuine piety, feel themselves constrained to oppose these men of titles who shelter themselves under the masked names of pastors, and prelates, and bishops, that they may delude the unwary and the ignorant; *Hear not,* he says, *the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.*

He adds, *They make you to be vain;* that is, they infatuate you.[1] But this would not have been sufficient, had he not added what more fully confirmed it. Hence Jeremiah says, that they brought forward the vision of their own hearts, and did not speak what came from God's mouth. This is a mark which can never deceive us, except we willingly throw ourselves into the snares and intrigues of Satan, as many do who wilfully seek to be deceived, and even hunt for falsehoods; but whosoever applies his mind to the study of truth, can never be deceived, if by this mark, which is set before us, he distinguishes between prophets and prophets; for every one who speaks according to the mere suggestions of his own mind must be an impostor. No one then ought

[1] The *Sept.* gives this version, "for they make a vain vision for themselves; from their heart they speak, and not from the mouth of the Lord." Though the sense is given, yet it is not a correct version. The *Vulg.* and *Syr.* keep nearer to the original, and render the first clause "and they deceive you." The words literally are, "Infatuating you *are* they." The whole verse is as follows,—

16. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
Hearken not to the words of the prophets,
Who prophesy unto you;
Infatuating you *are* they;
The vision of their own heart do they speak,
And not from the mouth of Jehovah.

The "And" in the last line is supplied in several copies, is given by the *Sept.* and the *Syr.* To render "from," as *Blayney* does, "after the mouth," &c., is no improvement. To speak "from the mouth of the Lord" is very striking. All the Versions retain the preposition "from," and the *Targ.* gives "word" for "mouth."—*Ed.*

to be deemed a sound teacher, but he who speaks from God's mouth.

But here a question may be raised, How can the common people understand that some speak from God's mouth, and that others propound their own glosses? I answer, That the doctrine of the Law was then sufficient to guide the minds of the people, provided they closed not their eyes; and if the Law was sufficient at that time, God does now most surely give us a clearer light by his prophets, and especially by his Gospel. Since then God has once given us his testimony, every one ought to obey him as soon as he knows what is right, what he ought to follow, and what he ought to shun.

We now then see how useful this passage is; for there is nothing more miserable than for men to be tossed here and there, and to be led astray from the way of salvation. There is therefore nothing more desirable than to know this way with certainty. Now, God shews us the way here as by the finger; for he says that those who speak from his mouth can be heard with safety; but that others are to be rejected, how much soever they may boast of being prophets, and thus seek under the guise of authority to subject men's minds captive to themselves. And this ought to suffice at this day to put an end to all controversies; for on this no doubt depends almost every question that is now agitated in the world. The Papists will have their own devices to be taken as oracles, and claim to be the Church; but we, on the other hand, say that perfect wisdom is alone to be found in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Gospel. Were we then to attend to the mouth of God, it would be easy to settle all the disputes between us. It hence also follows, that the Papists are deceived because they deign not to ask at God's mouth, but choose to become slaves to men and to their own falsehoods, rather than to inquire what pleases God; for he himself has spoken, and has not spoken hiddenly, neither doubtfully nor obscurely; for there is nothing more clear than his teaching, provided men do not become wilfully blind. He then adds,—

17. They say still unto them that 17. Dicentes dicendo iis qui me

despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

18. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard *it?*

contemnunt, Loquutus est Jehova, Pax erit vobis; et omnibus qui ambulant (cunctis ambulantibus; *est quidem singularis numerus, ad verbum,* cuique ambulanti) in pravitate cordis sui, dicunt, Non veniet super vos malum.

18. Nam quis stetit in consilio Jehovæ? et vidit et audivit sermonem ejus? quis attendit ad sermonem ejus et audivit?

Jeremiah introduces another mark by which the false prophets might be known as different from the true prophets,—they flattered the ungodly and wicked despisers of God. He thus repeats what he had before said, that they strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that they became hardened in their impiety, and threw aside every care for repentance. Though he uses different words, yet the meaning is the same, that they *promised peace,* or prosperity, to the despisers of God; for the word שָׁלוֹם, *shalum,* means to live well or happily.

They say, then, *to those who despise* or reject *me;* for נָאֹץ, *nats,* means both. The doubling of the word for "saying," is also emphatical, אֹמְרִים אָמוֹר, *amrim amur:*[1] for we know with how much haughtiness and confidence the false prophets dared to announce their dreams; for they were led by the spirit of pride, as they were the children of Satan. Hence then was their confidence, so that they made their declarations as though they had come down from heaven. *They say,* then, *by saying;* that is, they promise, and that with great effrontery, that peace would be to all the despisers of God; and not only so, but they pretended God's name, *Spoken has Jehovah.*[2] They wished to be deemed the instru-

[1] Some, as *Venema* and *Blayney,* think that אמרים belongs to the preceding verse; but this would not consist with the Hebrew idiom, where a participle often precedes a verb in the future tense, but never follows it; nor is this countenanced by any of the Versions or the *Targ.* The words as they stand are indeed unusual; the probability is that אמור should be אמרו, and all the Versions give it as such, "they say." Then it would be, "Saying they say;" which imports the boldness and the confidence of the false prophets; that is, "They boldly say."—*Ed.*

[2] There is a difference in the early versions as to this clause; it is connected in the *Sept.* and *Arab.* with the preceding, "They say to those who reject the word of the Lord," &c., and *Blayney* has followed this arrange-

ments or agents of the Holy Spirit, while they were vainly announcing, as it has been said, their own imaginations. And hence Jeremiah applied to them, though improperly, the word *vision, They speak the vision of their own heart.* By using this word he makes a concession; for he might have said only, that they adduced nothing but trifles, even the falsehoods which they themselves had devised, but he mentions the word חָזוֹן, *chezun*, which in itself ought to be deemed of high import. And yet he means that they were only apes as prophets, when they prattled of visions and confidently declared that they brought forward the revelations of the Spirit. He then concedes to them, though improperly, that they saw visions; but what did they see? even that *Jehovah had spoken, Peace shall be to you.*

Then he says, *They promise to those who walk in the wickedness of their own heart,* that all things shall turn out well to them, *No evil shall come upon you;* as though he had said, "They promise impunity to all the wicked."

The verse which follows is usually thus explained, Jeremiah condemns the false teachers for their carelessness, because they attended not to the word of God, and regarded as nothing what the Law contained. But interpreters seem to me to have been certainly much mistaken in this view; for Jeremiah here shews throughout the passage how insolently and arrogantly the false teachers conducted themselves in audaciously opposing the true and faithful servants of God, *Who has stood in the counsel of Jehovah?* They no doubt spoke thus tauntingly of the true prophets, "What! These announce to you pestilence, war, famine, as though they were angels sent by God from heaven; have they stood in the counsel of God?" Thus I connect this verse with the

ment. The *Vulg.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.*, take it as a separate clause, and render it as here. The Hebrew no doubt admits of either constructions, but the Lord appears to be the speaker, and therefore the latter construction ought to have the preference,—

17. They boldly say to those who despise me,
Spoken hath Jehovah, "Peace shall be to you;"
And to every one who walks in the resolutions of his own heart,
They say, "Not come upon you shall evil."

This rendering also corresponds more with what is said in verse 25, that the prophets prophesied lies in God's *name.*—*Ed.*

former, for I am fully persuaded that he refers here to the arrogance which the false teachers manifested towards the true teachers.[1]

Examples of this in our time give a plain exposition to this passage. For when the Papists feel themselves driven to an extremity, when they prevail nothing by clamour and falsehood, they run to this sort of evasion, "Ho! if we must determine everything in religion by the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, what certainty can be found? The Scripture is like a nose of wax, for it can be turned to anything, and no meaning can with certainty be elicited; thus all things will remain perplexed and doubtful, if authority belongs to the Scripture alone." We then see that the enemies of truth at this day, when they cannot otherwise cover their filthiness, labour to throw all things into confusion, and to discredit God's word, and to introduce such darkness, that white cannot be distinguished from black, that light becomes mixed with darkness.

Similar to this was the perverse wickedness of the false teachers. For Jeremiah and his associates, when they came forth, declared that God's vengeance could no longer be deferred, for the people continued to provoke it; and they announced themselves as the heralds of God and witnesses to

[1] What seems to militate against this view is the fact, that these false prophets themselves pretended to a divine revelation; they announced their message as coming from God. Hence these questions seem to deny their pretensions. He seems to say, "Who of you have been in the council of Jehovah?" The tautology may be avoided without having recourse to the emendations which *Blayney* proposes,—

But who (of you) has stood in the secret council of Jehovah?
And saw and understood his business?
Who has listened to his word and heard *it*?

We know that דבר means not only a word, but also a thing, affair, business, matter, any thing represented or imagined. The verb to "see," which implies a vision, proves that it means the latter here. Then in the last line it means a message, because it was what was listened to and heard. But the verb שמע, in the first clause, comports with seeing, and understanding is what it sometimes signifies; and in the last clause it comports with listening, which is that of hearing. The Prophet refers to a vision and to a message, or to an affair as set before one admitted into the council chamber of his sovereign, (for this is the representation,) and to a message given to him who is commissioned to transact the business. It is not an unusual thing in Scripture to use a word in two different senses in the same passage; but the surrounding context is always sufficient to make the subject clear.—*Ed.*

his hidden purpose; but these unprincipled men, that they might lull to sleep, yea, and stupify the consciences of men, said, "Eh! *who has stood* in the *counsel of Jehovah? who has heard? who has attended? who has seen?* all these things are uncertain; and though these severely threaten you with pestilence, war, and famine, yet there is no reason why ye ought to fear. Be then easy, and quietly and cheerfully enjoy yourselves, for they do not understand the purpose of God." And this meaning we shall presently see confirmed by what is said in verse 22, ואם עמדו בסודי, *veam omdu besudi*, "And if they had stood in my counsel." There is then no doubt but that he turns against them what they perversely boasted. But it now follows,—

19. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

19. Ecce turbo (*vel*, tempestas) Jehovæ cum furore (*vel*, cum iracundia) egreditur, et turbo impendens super caput impiorum cadet (*vel*, turbo cadens cadet; *est participium* מתחולל, *et postea est simplex verbum*, sed eadem est radix utriusque.)

I shall defer the consideration of this to the next Lecture. To-morrow there will be no Lecture, for, as you know, the conferring of honours will engage us.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are ever inclined to be led away by ensnaring flatteries, and thus seek death and final ruin for ourselves,—O grant that we may learn to tremble at those denunciations announced by the prophets, by which thou shewest to us thy wrath, so that we may be roused to true repentance, and not harden ourselves through thy forbearance in what is evil, but pursue our heavenly course, until having at length put off all our vices, we shall be restored to that perfect form in which thy holy image fully shines forth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Eighth.

THE verse which I read at the end of my last Lecture must be now repeated to you, *Behold, the tempest* (or whirlwind) of Jehovah! it shall go forth with *fury; even the impending*

whirlwind! on the head of the ungodly shall it abide, or fall; for יחול, *ichul*, means both. The Prophet now assails with more vehemence the false teachers, for they were almost stupid. None, indeed, can betray so much audacity as to oppose God, except when wholly blinded by Satan. Hence our Prophet deals with the false teachers as with fanatics or those wholly stupified: he tells them that God would come like a *whirlwind*. Whether we render it a whirlwind or a storm, there is not much difference.[1] And he adds, that they could not escape, for the wrath of God was impending over them, and would at length remain on them.

Now, it is usual in Scripture to deal very sharply with hypocrites, and especially with false teachers, because Satan rules in them to an awful extent. And doubtless, as I have already said, except a person be fascinated with illusions, he could not dare to oppose God. There is, then, no wonder that the Prophet fulminates against these ungodly teachers; for it was nothing but play and sport to them to pretend God's sacred name that they might deceive the people. He afterwards adds,—

20. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

23. Non revertetur iracundia Jehovæ usque dum fecerit, et usque dum stabilierit cogitationes cordis sui: in extremitate dierum intelligetis hoc intelligentia (*hoc est*, intelligetis hujus rei intelligentiam, *ad verbum*.)

He confirms what he had said, lest the hypocrites, with whom he had to do, should think that their punishment would be light and soon pass away. For though they may have seen that God's hand was armed against them, yet they

[1] "Storm," or tempest, is the most suitable here. The word חמה, after Jehovah, seems to belong to it—"hot tempest;" the reference is to the burning winds of the south. See chap. iv. 11, 12. The verse may be thus rendered,—

Behold the burning tempest of Jehovah!
It shall go forth, yea, a pregnant tempest;
On the head of the wicked shall it burst.

The tempest or storm would be "burning," and also "pregnant," or in travail, as the word means; and being as it were in labour, it would "burst," or literally bring forth on the head of the wicked. The verb is not from יחל, but from חול, which means not only to be in labour but also to bring forth. "It shall come," is the *Sept.* and the *Vulg.*; our version is the *Targum*.—*Ed.*

took comfort, because they expected that it would only be for a short time. Hence Jeremiah here reminds them that they were much deceived if they thought that they could dissipate as a cloud the vengeance that was at hand; for God would not cease to punish them until he had destroyed them.

There was another security which deceived the ungodly: they were not terrified by threatenings of the Prophet, because they thought that God was in a manner dallying with them whenever he denounced ruin. And, doubtless, the wicked could not have so securely indulged themselves, had it not been that they did not believe that God's word would be fulfilled. As, then, God's threatenings did not strike hypocrites with terror, the Prophet here declares that there was no reason for them to harbour the vain hope that God only uttered words, and that there would be no execution of his vengeance.

Turn back, he says, *shall not the anger of Jehovah until he has performed and confirmed the thoughts of his heart.* Jeremiah shews that God had not spoken in vain by his servants, according to what is done by men, who often speak rashly, for their tongue frequently outruns their purpose. But he reminds them here that God is far different from men, for he ever speaks in earnest, and his prophetic word is a sure evidence of his hidden purpose, as it will again be presently declared. This is the reason why he mentions *the thoughts of his heart.*

We must not yet think that God is like us, as though he reflected on this thing and on that, and formed many purposes, while one thing or another comes into his mind; no, such a gross idea as this cannot be entertained, and cannot be consistent with the nature of God.

But Jeremiah calls, by a kind of metaphor, the counsel of God his *thoughts*, even that fixed and unchangeable counsel, which he declared by his prophets. Sometimes, indeed, God threatened, in order to restore men to repentance; but we must bear in mind that he neither varies himself nor changes his purpose. Whatever, then, the prophets announced in his name, flowed from his hidden purpose, and it

was the same as though he had made known to us his own heart. And it is no small commendation to prophetic doctrine that God as it were connected his heart with his mouth. The mouth of God is the doctrine itself; and he says now that it had proceeded from the depth of his heart. It hence follows that there is nothing frustratory, (deceptive,) as they say, in God's word; for he here declares that whatever he had committed to his servants were the thoughts of his heart. And to *confirm*, or establish, must be applied to the execution of his thoughts.

The sum of the whole is, that God now pronounces a sentence against the people, which could not be reversed; for he had once for all decreed to destroy the men who were obstinate in their sins.

But he seems to refer to the word יחול, *ichul*, which means, as I have said, to fall, and also to abide or to lie upon. According to this meaning, he says now, that the anger of God would not return, so as to change its course, until it had completed what had already been decreed, even what God had resolved respecting the destruction of the people.

Then he adds, *In the extremity of days ye shall understand the knowledge of this thing.* So it is literally; but we may give a simpler version, "Ye shall perceive the knowledge of this matter," or "Ye shall know what this means." The Prophet, no doubt, exults over the insensibility of those who could not be moved by such awful warnings. We know how great is the hardness of the ungodly, especially when Satan possesses their minds and hearts. There is, indeed, no iron and no stone which has so much hardness as there is in the perversely wicked; and they in a manner assail God with the greatest obstinacy, as though they were victorious, for they despise all his warnings and threatenings. Hence the Prophet derides their insolence, or rather their madness, and says, "Ye shall understand," but too late; for by *extremity of days*,[1] he means the time which God had appointed for

[1] Literally, "at the posteriority of days," meaning, at a future time, without designating any particular period; it is the same as "hereafter." The words which follow can hardly be rendered literally in our language—"ye shall discern it *with* discernment." What is the antecedent to "it," which is ה, a feminine gender? *Venema* says that it is to be taken as a neuter;

his anger. But yet God had in due time warned them that they might repent before his judgment came. It was now then the same as though he left them in their own stupor, and said that they could not, however, escape the hand of God by their perverseness, according to what Paul says, "Let him who is ignorant, be ignorant." (1 Cor. xiv. 38.) He no doubt checks the arrogance of those who rejected every sound doctrine and all right counsels.

So, then, the Prophet teaches us here that hypocrites gain nothing by setting up their own contumacy and arrogance in opposition to God, for they will find, though too late, that God has not spoken in vain. We then see that by *extremity of days* is to be understood that time when the door shall be closed, because they did not in due time respond to God when he invited them to himself, and set before them the hope of salvation.

There is also another truth taught us here, that we are to seek God while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. (Is. lv. 6.) For if we abuse his forbearance and despise him who speaks to us to-day, we shall find out too late, and not without the most grievous sorrow, that we have been deceived by the devil, because we did not attend to God calling us. It follows,—

21. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

21. Non misi prophetas, et ipsi cucurrerunt; non loquutus sum ad eos, et ipsi prophetarunt.

The Prophet again warns the Jews not to be perverted by the flatteries of false teachers, and not to disregard the threatenings of God. We have already said that the minds of the people were then lulled asleep by false teachers, who promised them impunity. And there is no evil worse than

but if so, what does it refer to? It appears to me that there is nothing in the passage to which it can be referred, except to the "tempest," which is feminine, in the former verse; they would understand at a future time the meaning of that tempest, that it was from the Lord as a punishment for their sins. This they did not understand at the time. These two verses are found nearly in the same words at the end of chap. xxx. The last word is omitted there,—"At the posteriority of days ye shall discern it," or understand it, or consider it.

The *Vulg.* here is, "at the last days ye shall understand his counsel;" the *Sept.*, "at the last of days ye shall understand it;" and the *Targ.*, "at the end of days ye shall by understanding understand this."

when false teachers, under the name of God, flatter us, and drive away every fear and concern for our souls. This evil prevailed among the ancient people, as it does also at this day. Indeed the greater part of the world have ever sought flatterers, and when God sees that men thus indulge themselves, and in a manner seek for themselves snares, he gives loose reins to Satan and his ministers, that they may deceive those miserable men who thus wilfully seek to be deceived. The object, then, of Jeremiah was to remind the people often, that all flatteries were nothing but the wiles of Satan, or some deadly poison which stupified all their senses. For when one gives a person poison, which extinguishes the senses of the body and the faculties of the mind, it is all over with the miserable being who has been thus drugged. We see a similar thing done by false teachers, who soothe miserable sinners and promise peace to them, as we saw in our last lecture. As, then, it was difficult to awaken men out of this stupor, which became, as it were, innate in them, and as Satan always employs the same intrigues, it was necessary for the holy Prophet to urge his doctrine more and more.

God now says that he did *not send the Prophets*, and yet they *ran*. For this objection might have appeared sufficient against Jeremiah,—that he was alone, and that the other prophets were many in number. It is, indeed, the dictate of common sense, that we ought to believe a hundred persons rather than one. Jeremiah, then, was alone, and there was a great number of false prophets; and the prophetic name was common to them all. It was therefore necessary to meet this objection, which was calculated to render God's faithful servant contemptible. Hence he mentions the difference between the false teachers with whom he contended and himself, as though he had said, "I indeed am alone, but sent by God; and I am thoroughly convinced of my legitimate calling, and am also ready to prove that I bring no inventions of my own brain; let not, then, a false comparison of one man with a great multitude deceive you. For the question here is not of men or of their authority, but what we ought to inquire is, who sends them? If God be the

author of my mission, then I, though alone, am superior to the whole world; and if they have not been called by God, though they were a hundredfold more than they are, yet all that they boast of means nothing, for in God alone we ought to believe." We now see the design of the Prophet in saying that the prophets *ran*, but were not *sent*, that they *prophesied*, but had received no commands from God.

Now this passage especially teaches us that no one is worthy of being heard except he be a true minister of God. But there are two things necessary to prove a person to be such —a divine call, and faithfulness and integrity. Whosoever, then, thrusts in himself, however he may pretend a prophetic name, may be safely rejected, for God claims the right of being heard to himself alone. Yet a simple and naked call is not sufficient; but he who is called must also faithfully labour for his God; and both these things are intimated here, for he says that the prophets ran, though they were not sent, and that they prophesied, though they were without any command from God. I indeed allow that the same thing is here repeated, according to common usage, in Hebrew, in different words; yet the stronger expression is found in the second clause, for to send belongs properly to the call, and to command to the execution of the office. For God in the first place chose his prophets, and committed to them the office of teaching, and then he commanded them what to say, and dictated to them as it were his message, that they might not bring forward anything devised by themselves, but be only his heralds, as it has appeared elsewhere.[1]

We hence learn also that our ears ought not to be open to

[1] The order here is according to the usual style of the prophets; the most visible act is mentioned first—the prophets ran without being sent; then the previous act is referred to,—God never spoke to them, and yet they prophesied. They ran as though God had communicated something to them; but God neither spoke to them nor sent them. They had neither a mission nor a message from God. In the following verse, consistently still with the style of Scripture, the order is reversed. The message is first referred to, and then the mission. They had no message, because they never "stood" or were present in God's council; and then they did not go forth for the purpose of turning the people from their evil way.—*Ed.*

impostors, who boldly pretend the name of God, but that we ought to distinguish between true and false teachers; for Jeremiah does not here speak to a few men, but he addresses the whole people. And what he designed to shew was, that they in vain sought to escape under the pretence of ignorance, who were not attentive to sound doctrine; for except they designedly neglected God and his word, they might have known whom to believe. It hence follows that frivolous is the excuse which many consider at this day to be as it were their sacred asylum; for they plead in their own behalf they have been deceived by false teachers. But we ought to see and to inquire whether God has sent them, and whether they teach as coming from his school, and bring anything but what they have received from his mouth.

I shall not here speak at large of God's call; but if any one wishes for a very short definition, let him take the following: There is a twofold call; one is internal and the other belongs to order, and may, therefore, be called external or ecclesiastical. But the external call is never legitimate, except it be preceded by the internal; for it does not belong to us to create prophets, or apostles, or pastors, as this is the special work of the Holy Spirit. Though then one be called and chosen by men a hundred times, he cannot yet be deemed a legitimate minister, except he has been called by God; for there are peculiar endowments required for the prophetic, the apostolic, and the pastoral office, which are not in the power or at the will of men. We hence see that the hidden call of God is ever necessary, in order that any one may become a prophet, or an apostle, or a pastor. But the second call belongs to order; for God will have all things carried on by us orderly and without confusion. (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) Hence has arisen the custom of electing. But it often happens that the call of God is sufficient, especially for a time. For when there is no Church, there is no remedy for the evil, except God raises up extraordinary teachers. Then the ordinary call, of which we now speak, depends on a well-ordered state of things. Wherever there is a Church of God, it has its own laws, it has a certain rule of discipline: there no one should thrust in himself, so as to exercise the pro-

phetic or the pastoral office, though he equalled all the angels in sanctity. But when there is no Church, God raises up teachers in an unusual way, who are not chosen by men; for such a thing cannot be done, where no Church is formed.

This subject deserves, indeed, to be much more diffusely treated; but as I am not wont to digress unto particular points, it is enough for me to state what the present passage requires, which seems to be this,—that none ought to be acknowledged as God's servants and teachers in the Church, except those who have been sent by God, and to whom he has, as it were, stretched forth his hand and given them their commission. But as the internal call of God cannot be surely known by us, we ought to see and ascertain whether he who speaks is the organ or instrument of the Holy Spirit. For whosoever brings forward his own figments and devises, is unworthy of being attended to. Hence, let him who speaks shew really that he is God's ambassador; but how can he shew this? By speaking from the mouth of God himself; that is, let him not bring anything of his own, but faithfully deliver, as from hand to hand, what he has received from God. But as there might be still some perplexity on the subject, it follows—

22. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

22. Quod si stetissent in **concilio meo**, certe (*copula enim ita resolvi debet*) audire fecissent verba **mea populum meum** (*hoc est*, docuissent **populum meum** sermones meos) et **reduxissent eos a via sua** mala, et a malitia studiorum **ipsorum**.

This verse is as it were an explanation of the former; for many might have been perplexed, if it had only been said to them, that there are none who are fit and legitimate teachers but those who had been sent and entrusted with what God had commanded. Hence the Prophet here calls our attention to the truth which is certain and manifest; for God had delivered the sum of all truth in his Law. As then the perfection of wisdom was found in the Law, from which the prophets drew whatever we read in their writings, no excuses, such as the following, could be admitted,—"How can we know that the prophets speak from God's mouth, that

they bring nothing devised by themselves, that they have the instructions which God approves?"

The Prophet then calls the attention of the Jews to the Law, as though he had said as Moses did, "There is no need to ascend above the clouds, or to descend into the depths, or to run beyond the sea; for the Law and the word is nigh in thy mouth, that is, God has set before you whatever is necessary and useful to be known." (Deut. xxx. 12-14; Rom. x. 6.) This, then, is fully made known to you, nor will the knowledge of anything necessary be obscure, if ye attend to the Law. Hence the cause of error is not only your sloth, but also your perverseness; for ye wilfully neglect the Law, and remain doubtful and inquire, "Which is the way?" "This is the way," said Moses, "walk ye in it." (Deut. v. 33.)

We now then perceive what Jeremiah had in view: he had before said, that none were to be attended to, except they who were sent and spoke from the mouth of God; but he now explains what he meant, even that the Law contained the whole sum of wisdom. But as he had before introduced the false prophets, as boldly deriding the true and faithful servants of God, by objecting to them and saying, "Who had stood in the counsel of God? these imagine that they have fallen from the clouds, they terrify you with dreadful threatenings, as though they were angels from heaven,"—as then the false prophets were thus wont to speak disdainfully of God's servants, and alleged that they did not stand in God's counsel, Jeremiah now retorts upon them, and says, speaking in God's name, *If they had stood in my counsel,* they would doubtless have spoken from my Law; as though he had said, "They believe not my servants, because they are men and not angels; they hence deny that they are of my counsel: thus they persuade the whole people to despise the doctrine of salvation. There are, however, some prophets whom I have sent: now, if they wish to be deemed sent, let them prove themselves to be so." What is the true proof? If they had stood in my counsel, they would have doubtless made known my word to my people. What is that word? the definition follows, even the word of

the Law, *They would have turned* the straying people from their *evil way.*[1]

The passage may seem obscure, but from the context itself we can gather that the real design of the Prophet was to convict the false teachers, that they might no longer boast of God's name, and falsely pretend that they were endued with the prophetic office, and glory in that distinction. He says that it was an evident proof that they were not God's prophets, because they did not faithfully teach what they ought to have derived from the Law.

It is indeed certain, that no one has been God's counsellor, according to what Scripture says in many places, when the object is to check the arrogance of those who, in their curiosity, attempt to penetrate into the hidden judgments of God, (Isaiah xl. 13;) and Paul, while speaking of God's eternal election, it being incomprehensible, exclaims, Who has been his counsellor? (Rom. xi. 34.) He uses a similar language in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ii. 16:) and why? that he might check the temerity of the human mind, which ventures farther than it is lawful. But afterwards Paul adds by way of correction, "But we have the mind of Christ:" how so? because he has made known his counsel to us. When, therefore, the false prophets denied that God's servants were his counsellors, they might indeed have said so, viewing them only as mortal men; but their object was to discredit and to render void the word of God; so that they wished to put a restraint not only on men, but also on God himself. This was an intolerable insult to God.

Moreover, the Prophet now turns as it were upon them,

[1] In the *Sept.* there is no corresponding clause to the "if" at the beginning of the verse. The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.*, as in our version, make the "turning" to be such a clause, but strangely render it in the first person singular, "then would I have turned them," &c. The rendering of *Calvin* is the most suitable, only the ו after אִם might better be rendered "then" than "surely,"—

But if they had stood in my council,
Then would they have caused my people to hear my words,
And turned them from their wicked way,
And from the wickedness of their doings.

Blayney renders the verse in the same way, making the corresponding clause to begin at the second line.—*Ed.*

"There is then no Prophet of God in the world!" But fixed was that saying, that there would ever be some prophets; and none of the Jews could have dared to deny Moses to have been divinely inspired. This, then, being allowed, the Prophet now indirectly reproves them, "Where are the prophets of God?" and as they laid claim to this distinction, he says, "Doubtless ye stand not in God's counsel. How so? because the counsel of God is included in his Law; and as ye have departed from the doctrine of true religion, as ye have no care to convey instruction, as your doctrine does not teach men the fear of God, nor leads to repentance, it follows that ye are not God's counsellors nor his prophets." But that this may appear more evident, we must bear in mind what Moses said, that God has his own secret things, but that whatever is taught in the Law belongs to us and to our children. (Deut. xxix. 29.) There is then no reason why the inquiry should be difficult respecting the true prophets of God; for they, without controversy, deserve to be heard as the angels of God, who are faithful interpreters of his Law; but they who lead us away from the Law ought to be firmly and boldly rejected.

But we must also bear in mind the definition that is given when it is said, that they ought to have *turned* the people *from their evil way, and from the wickedness of their doings.*[1] We indeed know that the worst men insolently pretend to preach God's word, as the Papists do at this day: though they have inebriated the whole world with their ungodly and delirious doctrines, they yet boast that they are the servants of God. Hence the Prophet, after having spoken generally of God's word, adds a special distinction,—that the doctrine of God is that which edifies, which teaches and leads men to repentance and the fear of God, according to what Paul says, that the Scripture is useful for these purposes, (2 Tim. iii. 16;) for by so saying, he intended to condemn all false interpreters of Scripture, as there were many then who boasted that they were the best teachers, while yet they only pleased itching ears. As then there were

[1] Their "evil way" was their idolatry, and "the wickedness of their doings" was their injustice and immoral conduct.—*Ed.*

many who regarded display and not edification, Paul says, that the Scripture is useful; and therefore he rejected with contempt all expositions in which there was nothing useful. So also in this place the Prophet shews that the right and legitimate use of Scripture was when it was employed to restore men from their evil way.

There is, indeed, here an instance of a part being stated for the whole: for if we only exhort men to repent, there will be no great fruit; and our teaching would be defective, for the doctrine of repentance would be inefficient without faith and without calling on the name of God. But the Prophet did not intend here to mention every part of a sound and useful doctrine; he deemed it enough to confute the false teachers who wished to be alone in repute, while yet they had no care to edify the people; for they saw all things in disorder, they saw crimes prevailing everywhere, they saw a dreadful contempt of God, but to these things they were wholly blind. It might then have been hence easily inferred that they neither faithfully laboured for God nor manifested any care for the safety of the Church; for they thus betrayed miserable souls, whose ruin they saw was near at hand.

We now then see the whole design of the Prophet. But there is no doubt but that to the *evil way* he added *the wickedness of their doings*, in order that he might more fully expose the insensibility of those who under such an urgency were silent and remained inactive. There is sometimes the need of a moderate reproof; but when people allow themselves an extreme license in wickedness, when impunity is everywhere permitted, and when such corruptions prevail in common, that nothing remains untainted, if then the tongue of the teacher is silent and as it were tied, is he not rightly called an idle and a dumb dog? And thus the Prophet enhances the insensibility, for which he condemns the false teachers; they were silent, as though things were in a good order, while they had to witness not only common crimes, but even a vast accumulation of all kinds of crimes; for the people gave themselves up not only to one kind of wickedness, but to all kinds, and wholly despised God and his Law. It afterwards follows,—

23. *Am* I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?
24. Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

23. An Deus e propinquo, dicit Jehova? et non Deus e longinquo?
24. An absconderit vir in latebris et ego non videbo eum, dicit Jehova? an non cœlos et terram impleo, dicit Jehova?

Here he especially shakes off from hypocrites their self-delusions; for they were torpid in their vices, because they thought that they could in a manner blind the eyes of God. They did not indeed say so; but the heedless security of men would never be so great as it is, were they to believe that nothing is hid from God, but that he penetrates into the inmost recesses of the heart, that he discerns between the thoughts and the feelings, and leaves not unobserved the very marrow. If, then, this truth were fixed in the hearts of all, they would certainly obey God with more reverence, and also dread his threatenings.

As, then, they are so heedlessly torpid, it follows, that they imagine God as not having a clear sight, who sees only things nigh him, like one who has a deficient vision, who can see what is near at hand, but not what is far off. Such is what hypocrites dream God to be, who after the manner of men either connives at things, or is blind, or at least does not clearly see but what is near at hand. We now understand the design of the Prophet in saying, that Jehovah is God afar off as well as near at hand.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing necessary to be known for salvation is wanting in thy holy and celestial oracles, we may carefully and diligently study them, and so labour to make progress in the fear of thy name, in reliance on that grace which is offered to us in Christ, that we may derive real fruit from the reading and hearing of thy word; and may we also learn to turn everything to edification, so that thy name may be really glorified in us, and that we may through the whole course of our life make progress in faith and repentance, until we shall at length attain to that perfect holiness, to which thou daily invitest us, when we shall be wholly divested of all the filth of our flesh, and become fully renewed after the image of thy Son, our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Eighty-Ninth.

Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah? and not a God afar off? Will a man hide himself in darkness, or in coverts, *and I shall not see him,* or that I could not see him, *saith Jehovah? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith Jehovah?* Here the Prophet most sharply reproves the hypocrites, who thought that they had no concern with God, as is the case always with those who delude themselves in their sins. Though this truth is ever professed by them, that God is the judge of the world, and that an account must some time be rendered to him; yet they afterwards think that they can by some evasion escape, so that God will forgive them. In short, it is usual with hypocrites to trifle as it were childishly with God. On this account, God is grievously displeased with them, and declares that he is far different from what they imagine him to be. For while they thus set themselves up as arbitrators, so that they subject God to their own laws, they think him to be as it were dull of apprehension, and that he sees nothing, or at least very little; he says, that he is not only a God *near at hand* but also *afar off*.[1]

Some apply this to time, as though he denied that he lately came into existence; and so they think that the only true and eternal God is compared with idols, which men form presumptuously for themselves. But the other meaning is far more suitable,—even that he is a God afar off; for as it is said elsewhere, "Though he dwells on high, yet he sees everything that is done on earth." (Psalm cii. 19.) As, then, nothing escapes his sight, he is said to be a God afar off, while hypocrites thought him to be a God only near at hand, as we say in French, *De courte veue,* who sees only

[1] "Am I not a God here upon earth, that seems farther from me, as well as in heaven, that seemeth nearer to me, as being the place of my special residence? do you think that because my palace is in heaven I take no notice of what is done upon earth?"—*Gataker.* This appears to be the meaning; for he says afterwards, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?"

The words seem literally to be,—

21. Am I a God of nearness, saith Jehovah?
And not a God of distance?—*Ed.*

things near, as it were before the eyes. But a question has much more force than if it was said, that he was not merely a God near at hand; and this mode of speaking conveys reproof; for hypocrites greatly detract from his majesty, when they thus, according to their own notions, imagine that he can see no more than a mortal man. They would not indeed have dared to speak thus; but when any one examined all their counsels and their actions, he would have found that they could have never shewn so much audacity, had they not deceived themselves with the vain notion, that God could be deceived.[1] And, therefore, Jeremiah does not relate their words, but points out the wickedness which sufficiently manifested itself in their doings, though they professed otherwise with their tongues.

And that this is the meaning appears more clearly from the next verse, which ought to be read in connexion with this; *Will a man hide himself in coverts, that I should not see him?*[2] This verse is added by way of explanation; there can therefore be no doubt respecting the words, far off and near,—that God is said to be a God afar off, because his eyes penetrate into the lowest depths, so that nothing can escape him.

It is a wonder that the Greek translators made so great a mistake; for they wholly changed the sense,—that God is a God nigh at hand, but not afar off. In the first place, they did not consider the question, and then, as they did not see the drift of the passage, they contrived from their own brains what is wholly remote from the words of the Prophet. This sentiment, that God is nigh and not afar off, is indeed

[1] "The Scripture," says *Venema*, "often brings to light and condemns, not what men profess, but what may be inferred from their doings."—*Ed.*

[2] The future here ought to be rendered potentially,—

Can a man hide in hiding-places,
That I should not see him, saith Jehovah?
Do not I fill the heavens and the earth, saith Jehovah?

The first line may be thus rendered more literally,—

Can a man secrete himself in secrecies?

In *Welsh*,—

A lecha dyn mewn llechveydd?

"The heavens," and not "heaven," ought to be the word in the last line; and so does *Blayney* render it. The visible and the invisible heaven are intended.—*Ed.*

Lecture Eighty-Ninth.

Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah? and not a God afar off? Will a man hide himself in darkness, or in coverts, *and I shall not see him,* or that I could not see him, *saith Jehovah? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith Jehovah?* Here the Prophet most sharply reproves the hypocrites, who thought that they had no concern with God, as is the case always with those who delude themselves in their sins. Though this truth is ever professed by them, that God is the judge of the world, and that an account must some time be rendered to him; yet they afterwards think that they can by some evasion escape, so that God will forgive them. In short, it is usual with hypocrites to trifle as it were childishly with God. On this account, God is grievously displeased with them, and declares that he is far different from what they imagine him to be. For while they thus set themselves up as arbitrators, so that they subject God to their own laws, they think him to be as it were dull of apprehension, and that he sees nothing, or at least very little; he says, that he is not only a God *near at hand* but also *afar off*.[1]

Some apply this to time, as though he denied that he lately came into existence; and so they think that the only true and eternal God is compared with idols, which men form presumptuously for themselves. But the other meaning is far more suitable,—even that he is a God afar off; for as it is said elsewhere, "Though he dwells on high, yet he sees everything that is done on earth." (Psalm cii. 19.) As, then, nothing escapes his sight, he is said to be a God afar off, while hypocrites thought him to be a God only near at hand, as we say in French, *De courte veue*, who sees only

[1] "Am I not a God here upon earth, that seems farther from me, as well as in heaven, that seemeth nearer to me, as being the place of my special residence? do you think that because my palace is in heaven I take no notice of what is done upon earth?"—*Gataker*. This appears to be the meaning; for he says afterwards, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?"

The words seem literally to be,—

21. Am I a God of nearness, saith Jehovah?
And not a God of distance?—*Ed.*

things near, as it were before the eyes. But a question has much more force than if it was said, that he was not merely a God near at hand; and this mode of speaking conveys reproof; for hypocrites greatly detract from his majesty, when they thus, according to their own notions, imagine that he can see no more than a mortal man. They would not indeed have dared to speak thus; but when any one examined all their counsels and their actions, he would have found that they could have never shewn so much audacity, had they not deceived themselves with the vain notion, that God could be deceived.[1] And, therefore, Jeremiah does not relate their words, but points out the wickedness which sufficiently manifested itself in their doings, though they professed otherwise with their tongues.

And that this is the meaning appears more clearly from the next verse, which ought to be read in connexion with this; *Will a man hide himself in coverts, that I should not see him?*[2] This verse is added by way of explanation; there can therefore be no doubt respecting the words, far off and near,—that God is said to be a God afar off, because his eyes penetrate into the lowest depths, so that nothing can escape him.

It is a wonder that the Greek translators made so great a mistake; for they wholly changed the sense,—that God is a God nigh at hand, but not afar off. In the first place, they did not consider the question, and then, as they did not see the drift of the passage, they contrived from their own brains what is wholly remote from the words of the Prophet. This sentiment, that God is nigh and not afar off, is indeed

[1] "The Scripture," says *Venema*, "often brings to light and condemns, not what men profess, but what may be inferred from their doings."—*Ed.*

[2] The future here ought to be rendered potentially,—

Can a man hide in hiding-places,
That I should not see him, saith Jehovah?
Do not I fill the heavens and the earth, saith Jehovah?

The first line may be thus rendered more literally,—

Can a man secrete himself in secrecies?

In *Welsh*,—

A lecha dyn mewn llechveydd?

"The heavens," and not "heaven," ought to be the word in the last line; and so does *Blayney* render it. The visible and the invisible heaven are intended.—*Ed.*

true; but what is meant here is quite another thing,—that God sees in a way very different from men, for he fully and perfectly sees what is farthest from him, according to the passage we have quoted from Psalm cii. 19; and there is another in Psalm cxxxix. 7-12, where the Psalmist says, "Where shall I flee from thy face? for if I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I lie down in hell, there thou stretchest forth thine hand; if I take the wings of the dawn and fly to the clouds, even thine hand will lay hold of me there; if I seek coverts, even the night itself is before thee as the light, and darkness shines as the light." If, then, we join together these two passages, there will appear nothing ambiguous in the words of Jeremiah,—even that God penetrates with his eyes into the lowest depths, so that nothing is hid from him.

But Jeremiah not only explains the meaning of the last verse, but also makes a practical use of it; *Will any one*, he says, *hide himself in coverts that I should not see him?* The seeing of God has a reference to his judgment. Then all frivolous speculations ought to be cast aside, since Scripture says that God sees all things; but we ought especially to consider for what purpose it is that he sees all things; which is evidently this,—that he may at last call to judgment whatever is done by men. There is then an application of the doctrine to our case; for we hence learn, that whatsoever we do, think, and speak, is known to God.

By *coverts*, or hiding-places, he means all the secret frauds which men think they can cover; but by such an attempt they gain nothing but a heavier judgment. By coverts then we are to understand all those vain thoughts which hypocrites entertain; for they think that they can so hide themselves that God cannot see their purposes. Hence God laughs them to scorn, and says in effect, "Let them enter into their coverts, let them hide themselves as much as they please, I yet do see them in their coverts no less clearly than if they were quite close to me."

To confirm this he adds, *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith Jehovah?* This must not be refinedly explained of the infinite essence of God. It is indeed true, that his essence

extends through heaven and earth, as it is interminable. But Scripture will not have us to feed on frivolous and unprofitable notions; it teaches only what avails to promote true religion. What therefore God declares here, that he fills heaven and earth, ought to be applied to his providence and his power; as though he had said, that he is not so taken up with things in heaven that he neglects the concerns of earth, as profane men dream; but he is said to fill heaven and earth, because he governs all things, because all things are noticed by him, because he is, in short, the judge of the world.

We now perceive what the Prophet means; and this passage is entitled to particular notice, because this error of imagining a God like ourselves is inbred almost in us all. Hence it is, that men allow themselves so much liberty; for they consider it a light thing to discharge their duty towards God, because they reflect not what sort of being he is, but they think of him according to their own understanding and character. As, then, we are thus gross in our ideas, it becomes us carefully to reflect on this passage, where God declares, that he is not only a God *near at hand*, that is, that he is not like us, who have only a limited power of seeing, but that he sees in the thickest darkness as well as in the clearest light; and that therefore it avails those nothing to deceive themselves who dig for themselves caverns, as it is said in Isaiah, and hide themselves in deep labyrinths. (Is. ii. 21.) He thus denies that they gain anything, and gives this as the reason, "Because he fills heaven and earth;" that is, his providence, his power, and his justice are so diffused everywhere, that wherever men betake themselves, it is impossible for them to be concealed from him. It follows,—

25. I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

25. Audivi quod dicunt (*vel*, quid dicant,) prophetæ prophetantes in nomine meo, dicendo, somniavi, somniavi.

Jeremiah returns again to those impostors who soothed the people with their blandishments. Whenever Jeremiah and those who were like him, who faithfully performed their office, treated the people with severity by reproving and threatening them for their sins, these unprincipled men rose

to his people what was especially to be desired,—that he would cleanse his Church from such pollutions. He then shews that it was his purpose to take vengeance, because the false prophets had dared in such an impious and bold manner to abuse his sacred name. For it ever occurred to their minds, "How is it that God permits this? Is it because he cares not for the safety of his people? or does it give him any delight when he sees truth mingled with falsehood, and light with darkness?" Hence God here shews that he for a time bore with that sacrilegious audacity which the false prophets practised, but that he did not so connive at it as not at length to punish them.

How long? he says, which is the same as though he had said, "It shall not be perpetual; though I may delay, yet they shall know that they have with extreme perverseness abused my forbearance." And he also enhances their crime by saying, *How long shall it be in the heart of the prophets to prophesy falsehood?* By this way of speaking he intimates, that they erred not through ignorance, as many do, who through want of knowledge bring forth what they do not understand; but God here complains that these prophets, as it were designedly, rose up to suppress the truth. Then by *heart* is to be understood thought or purpose; as though he had said, that they designedly made a false pretence as to his name, that it was their settled purpose to deceive the people.[1]

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And this ought to be carefully noticed; for there are many plausible refinements, in which there is nothing solid, but they are mere trifles. If, then, at any time these vain thoughts seem pleasing to us, let us bear in mind what Jeremiah says here, that whatever proceeds not from God is the *deceit of the heart;* and further, that though the whole world applaud falsehoods and impostures, we ought yet to know that everything is a deceit which has not God himself as its author.

Then follows a clearer definition, that they *made his people to forget his name by their dreams, as their fathers had forgotten it through Baal.*[1] We may infer from this verse, that those with whom Jeremiah contended were not openly the enemies of the Law; for they held many principles of true religion. They maintained in common with the true and sincere worshippers of God this truth,—that the only true God ought to be worshipped; and also this,—that there was

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only one legitimate altar on which sacrifices according to the Law were to be offered. On these points, then, there was no controversy. But yet they deceived the people by their flatteries; for they made gain of their prophetic office. Hence Jeremiah condemns them, because they made God's name to be forgotten by their dreams, as their fathers had forgotten it through Baal; as though he had said, "These dreams are like the fictitious and spurious forms of worship, by which true religion was formerly subverted; for their fathers worshipped Baal and Baalim: they set up for themselves these false gods, and thus subverted the glory of God by their own devices." The impiety of the false prophets, who lived in the time of Jeremiah, was not indeed so gross; and yet it was an indirect defection, for they brought forward their dreams, and falsely professed that they were God's servants, though he had not commissioned them.

We have said elsewhere (verse 21) that their crime was twofold; first, they ran when not called nor sent; and secondly, they brought forward their own fancies and not the word of God. And this passage ought to be carefully noticed; for we here learn, that not only open defection cannot be endured by God, but also indirect depravations, which stealthily withdraw us from the fear of God. Then these two evils must be carefully avoided in the Church, if we desire to continue entire in our obedience to God. One evil is sufficiently known, that is, when truth is openly turned into falsehood, when men are drawn away into idolatry and filthy superstitions, or when the ancient people, as Jeremiah says, forgat the name of God through Baal. But the other evil is more hidden, and therefore more dangerous, that is, when some appearance of true religion is retained, and men are yet insidiously drawn away from the fear of God and his true worship, and from pure doctrine, as we see to be the case at this day in the Churches, which profess to have separated from the Papacy that they might embrace the doctrine of the Gospel: there are many among them who insidiously corrupt the simple and genuine doctrine of the Gospel. We see how many curious men there are at this time, who disturb all things by their own inventions, and

how absurdly many seek refinements, and how confidently also do many propound their own inventions as oracles! It behoves us then to be watchful, not only that we may shun open abominations, but that we may also retain the pure and true word of God, so as not to allow false workers insidiously to corrupt and vitiate anything. It follows,—

28. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: what *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.	28. Propheta apud quem est somnium, narrabit somnium; et apud quem est sermo meus, narrabit sermonem meum veritatis: quid paleæ ad triticum, dicit Jehova?

We ought also to read this verse attentively, for doubtless it contains a doctrine especially useful. I have already said, that the faith of many might have failed at seeing a conflict in the Temple of God, not only among the common people, but also among the prophets of God. God did not appear from heaven, nor did he send his angels, but would have himself to be heard through men. They who came to the Temple expected the prophets to teach them. There the ministers of Satan appeared, who corrupted and perverted all things. There were a few, who sincerely declared the truth of God, and faithfully explained what God commanded. What could miserable men do in this case, who were willing to obey, and possessed a teachable spirit? Hence it was, that many threw aside every concern for religion, and gave themselves up to despair: "What means all this? why are there so many discords, so many disputes, so many contentions, so many invectives? Where can we now betake ourselves? It is better not to care for anything any more." Thus many took occasion to indulge their indifference, choosing not to weary themselves any more, nor to seek what God was, what his will was, whether there was salvation for them, whether there was any hope, rather than to entangle themselves in troublesome and thorny disputes.

Such a temptation existed in the time of Jeremiah. He, therefore, applied in due time a suitable remedy and said, *The Prophet, who has a dream*, that is, with whom is a dream, *he will relate a dream;* and then, *The Prophet with whom is my word, he will speak my word;*[1] as though God had said,

[1] All the early versions and the *Targ.* render the last verb in the imperative mood, "Let him speak," &c. And so most of modern expounders.—*Ed.*

that it was an extremely wicked thing to obstruct the way of truth by falsehood. But this is what usually happens, as I have already said: for where Satan has his agents, an obstacle seems to be in our way which prevents us to go on and proceed in the course of true religion. For when those who are right-minded, as we have said, see the prophets themselves contending, disputing, and quarrelling, they stand still, nay, they go backward. Now God shews that this is extremely unreasonable. Then the meaning is, as though he had said, "Let not the false prophets by their fallacies impede the course of God's servants, that they may not proceed, and that his word should not be reverently heard."

Unless we attend to this which the Prophet had in view, the passage will appear unmeaning. It has been often quoted, but this circumstance has not certainly been observed. We ought, therefore, ever to consider, why is a thing said. This verse depends on what is gone before; and God here answers a question, which might have been raised,—"What then must we do, for falsehoods conflict with truth?" God answers, that his word ought not to be prejudiced by this circumstance: as though he had said, "Let nothing prevent my Prophets from teaching; I bid them to be heard." We hence conclude, that those do wrong to God, who allege the controversies, by which religion is torn and as it were lacerated, and think that they thus obtain a license to indulge their impiety; for it is not a reason that can avail them, that Satan and his ministers labour to discredit the authority of God and of his servants. Though these false prophets insinuate themselves, though they may set up themselves against the true and faithful servants of God, yet let dreams, that is, prophetic revelations, retain their weight, and *let him with whom is God's word, speak the word of God*, so that it may be heard. This clause refers to the hearers; they were not to desist from rendering obedience to the Law, how much soever Satan might strive to subvert their faith by attempting to destroy its unity.

It afterwards follows, *What is the chaff to the wheat?* This addition was also wholly necessary, for many might have again objected and said, that they had no sufficient judg-

ment to distinguish between the true and false prophets. God here gives the answer that the difference between true and false doctrine was nothing less than what made a careful examination that between wheat and chaff. And by this comparison he shews how foolishly and absurdly many detract from the authority of the Law on the pretence that there are many who falsely interpret it. For when any one rejects the wheat because it is covered with chaff, does he not deserve to perish through hunger? and who will pity him who says that he has mixed wheat in his flour but that it is mixed with chaff, and therefore not fit for food? Why, then, thou silly man, dost not thou separate the chaff from the wheat? But thou chooses to perish through want rather than to cleanse the wheat that thou mayest have it for thy food. So also in the Temple the wheat is often mixed with the chaff, the pure truth of God is often defiled with many glosses and vain figments; and yet except it be our own fault, we shall be able to distinguish between the wheat and the chaff. But if we be negligent, and think that it is a sufficient excuse for despising the word of God, because Satan brings in his fallacies, we shall perish in our sloth like him who neglects to cleanse his wheat that he might turn it to bread. But the time will not allow me to say more.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou art graciously pleased daily to set before us thy sure and certain will, we may open our eyes and ears, and raise all our thoughts to that which not only reveals to us what is right, but also confirms us in a sound mind, so that we may go on in the course of true religion, and never turn aside, whatever Satan and his ministers may devise against us, but that

[1] The difference between the chaff and the wheat is what the *Sept.* and *Vulg.* intimate, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" But the *Syr.* has another idea, "Why mingle ye the chaff with the wheat?" The literal rendering of the Hebrew is, "Why to the chaff the wheat?" The mixture is what seems to be intended. So thought *Gataker* and *Blayney*, who rendered it, "What has the chaff to do with the wheat?" that is, why do you mix them together? And so does Adam *Clarke* view the phrase. *Venema*, *Henry*, *Scott*, and *Lowth* take the first meaning, which is also that of our version; but the other is more agreeable to the original.—*Ed.*

we may stand firm and persevere, until having finished our warfare, we shall at length come unto that blessed rest which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninetieth.

We saw yesterday that though the false prophets corrupted the true doctrine, yet the prophetic office remained in its honour without any loss to its authority. Hence Jeremiah said that all their fallacies ought not to be an hinderance to the faithful, so as to prevent them to proceed in the course of their calling, and that no one should object and say, that in so confused a state of things he could not know what to avoid and what to follow: he said that the difference between wheat and chaff was easily perceived, provided men were not wilfully blind. He now adds,—

29. *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?

29. An non ut sit sermo meus quasi ignis (*hoc est*, an non sermo meus tanquam ignis) dicit Jehova? et tanquam malleus conterens saxum (*vel*, rupem.)

He confirms what he said of the chaff and the wheat, but in different words. It was a fit comparison when Jeremiah compared God's word to wheat, and the figments of men to chaff. But as the Jews, through their ingratitude, rendered the word of God ineffectual, so it did not become to them a spiritual support, the Prophet says that it would become like a *fire* and like a *hammer*,[1] as though he had said, that though the Jews were void of judgment, as they had become hardened in their wickedness, yet the word of God could not be rendered void, or at least its power could not be taken away; for as Paul says, "If it is not the odour of life unto life, it

[1] The particle כה at the beginning of this verse, rendered *ut* by *Calvin*, seems to be without meaning. It is omitted by the *Vulg.*, and rendered "behold" by the *Sept.* and *Syr.*, as though it was הנה. *Venema* regarded it either as a noun, burning, from כוה, to burn, or a misprint for כח, strength, vigour, power. The last is adopted by *Blayney*, and approved by *Horsley*, and is countenanced by the *Targ.*, "Are not all my words strong as fire?" *Blayney's* version is,—

Is not the power of my word like fire?

This is the most probable meaning; though there is no different reading, yet the difference between the two letters is very small.—*Ed.*

is the odour of death unto death to those who perish," (2 Cor. ii. 16;) and so also the same Apostle says in another place, that God's servants had vengeance in their power, for they bear the spiritual sword, in order to cast down every height that exalteth itself against Christ; but he adds, "After the obedience" of the faithful "had been completed." (2 Cor. x. 6.) The first and as it were the natural use of God's word is to bring salvation to men; and hence it is called food; but it turns into poison to the reprobate: and this is the reason for so great a diversity.

He said, first, that God's word was wheat, because souls are nourished by it unto a celestial life; and nothing can be more delightful than this comparison. But now he declares it to be *fire* and a *hammer*. There is in these terms some appearance of contradiction; but there is a distinction to be made as to the hearers, for they who reverently embrace the word of God, as it becomes them, and with genuine docility of faith, find it to be food to them; but the ungodly, as they are unworthy of such a benefit, find it to be far otherwise. For the word which is in itself life-giving, is changed into fire, which consumes and devours them; and also it becomes a hammer to break, to tear them in pieces, and to destroy them.

The import of the whole is, that God's word ever retains its own dignity; for if it happens to be despised by men, it cannot yet be deprived of its vigour and efficacy; if it be not wholesome for food, it will be like fire or like a hammer. Then these two comparisons belong to the wicked, for God's word has another sense when called fire with reference to the faithful, even because it dries up and consumes the lusts of the flesh, as silver and gold are purified by fire. Hence the word of God is properly and fitly called fire, even with regard to the faithful; but not a devouring but a refining fire. But when it comes to the reprobate, it must necessarily destroy them, for they receive not the grace that it offers to them. It may also be called a hammer, for it subdues the depraved affections of the flesh and such as are opposed to God even in the elect; but it does not break the elect, for they suffer themselves to be subdued by it.

But this *hammer* is said to break the stone or the rock, because the reprobate will not bear to be corrected; they must, therefore, be necessarily broken and destroyed. For this reason Paul also, while speaking of the refractory, says, "Let him who is ignorant be ignorant." (1 Cor. xiv. 38.) For by these words he means that they will at last find how great is the hardness of that word with which they dare to contend through the perverseness of their heart. But that passage which I have before quoted well explains what is here said by Jeremiah, even that truth in itself is wholesome, but that it turns into an odour of death unto death to those who perish. (2 Cor. ii. 16.) Paul, indeed, speaks of the Gospel, but this may be also applied to the Law. It now follows,—

30. Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

30. Propterea ecce ego ad (*vel*, super) prophetas, dicit Jehova, qui furantur sermones meos, quisque a socio suo:

31. Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

31. Ecce ego ad (*vel*, super, *vel*, contra) prophetas, dicit Jehova, qui mollificant (*vel*, tollunt) linguam suam, et dicunt, sermo (*vel*, dictio:)

32. Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

32. Ecce ego super (*vel*, ad, *vel*, contra) prophetantes somnia mendacii, dicit Jehova, et narrant illis et decipiunt populum meum in mendaciis suis et levitate sua; et ego (*hoc est*, quanquam ego) non miserim ipsos, neque mandaverim illis, et utilitate non proderunt (proficiendo non afferent utilitatem) populo huic, dicit Jehova.

Jeremiah returns again to the false teachers, who were the authors of all the evils; for they fascinated the people with their flatteries, so that every regard for sound and heavenly doctrine was almost extinguished. But while God declares that he is an avenger against them, he does not exempt the people from punishment. We indeed know that a just reward was rendered to the reprobate, when God let loose the reins to the ministers of Satan with impunity to deceive them. But as the people acquiesced in those false allurements, while Jeremiah so severely reproved the false teachers, he reminds the people how foolishly they betook themselves under the shadow of those men, thinking themselves to be safe.

He says, first, *Behold, I am against the prophets, who steal my words every one from his neighbour.* Many explain this verse as though God condemned the false prophets, who borrowed something from the true prophets, so that they might be their rivals and as it were their apes; and no doubt the ungodly teachers had ever from the beginning made some assumptions, that they might be deemed God's servants. But it seems, however, a forced view, that they stole words from the true prophets, for the words express what is different, that they stole *every one from his friend.* Jeremiah would not have called God's faithful servants by this name. I rather think that their secret arts are here pointed out, that they secretly and designedly conspired among themselves, and then that they spread abroad their own figments according to their usual manner. For the ungodly and the perfidious, that they might obtain credit among the simple and unwary, consulted together and devised all their measures craftily, that they might not be immediately found out; and thus one took from the other what he afterwards announced and published. And this is what Jeremiah calls stealing, because they secretly consulted, and then declared to the people what they agreed upon among themselves; and they did this as though every one had derived his oracle from heaven. I have, therefore, no doubt but that the Prophet condemns these hidden consultations when he says that every one stole from his neighbour.[1]

We indeed see the same thing now under the Papacy, for the monks and unprincipled men of the same character have their own false doctrines; and when they ascend the pulpit,

[1] Various have been the expositions of this sentence: they adopted the manner of the true prophets, as some say, and used their words, an instance of which is found in chap. xxviii. 1-4; and this is the view of *Scott;* others hold that the imitation in saying, "Thus saith the Lord," is what is referred to. It has also been suggested that they are intended—who, knowing the truth, withheld it from the people; and that to withhold what they knew, is represented here as stealing. But none of these views sufficiently account for the words here used, "who steal my words every one from his neighbour." They were God's words committed to the people, and these prophets stole them, that is, by rendering them void by their falsehoods and vain dreams, as Satan is said to steal the seed sown in the heart of the way-side hearer. This is the view taken by *Grotius, Venema,* and *Gataker.—Ed.*

every one speaks as though he was endued with some special gift; and yet they steal every one from his friend, for they are like the soothsayers or the magi, who concocted among themselves their own falsehoods, and only brought out what they deemed necessary to delude the common people. This, then, was one of the vices which the Prophet shews prevailed among the false teachers,—that no one attended to the voice of God, but that every one took furtively from his friend what he afterwards openly proclaimed.

He adds, secondly, *Behold, I am against the prophets, who mollify their own tongue.* Almost all interpreters take לקח, *lekech*, as signifying to render sweet or soft; and they understand that the false prophets are condemned, because they flattered the wicked for the sake of gain; for had they offended or exasperated them, they could not have attached them to themselves. They then think that to mollify their tongue means here that they used their tongue in speaking smooth and flattering things. But others give another explanation,—that they mollified their tongue because they polished their words in imitation of God's servants, so that their speech was sweeter than honey. But as לקח, *lekech*, means to receive and to take, and sometimes to raise on high, and sometimes to carry, I see not why it should not be taken in its proper meaning. I certainly see no reason to turn its meaning to a metaphor, when it can be taken in its plain sense of raising their tongue; they elevated themselves, and in high terms boasted that the office of teaching had been committed to them, for we know how haughtily false teachers elevate themselves. Therefore the verse may be taken thus, that God would punish those impostors who raised their tongue, that is, who proudly boasted and boldly arrogated to themselves authority, as though they were messengers from heaven.[1]

[1] There are those who, with *Houbigant*, suppose a transposition in the word, the ח being put last instead of being first; and then it would mean to render smooth. But this does not suit the passage. The probable idea is what is given paraphrastically by the *Sept.*, "who send forth the prophecies of the tongue;" they derived their prophecies from their own hearts and their own tongues, and said that they came from God. They took or used their tongues only, and at the same time professed to speak

It afterwards follows, *And they say*, נְאֻם, *nam, he saith.* We know that it was a common thing for all the prophets to add, נְאֻם יְהוָה, *nam Jeve*, the saying of Jehovah, or the word of Jehovah, in order to shew that they said nothing but what they had received from above. And if we read this verse as connected together, we shall find true what I have said,—that the verb לָקַח, *lekech*, does not mean the smoothness or adulation used, but the lofty vaunting of the false teachers, who wished to be deemed the organs of the Holy Spirit, and assumed to themselves all the authority of God. For their elation was this, that they confidently boasted that God himself had spoken, and said that it was *the word;* and they did this, that whatever they prattled might appear indisputed, though it was sufficiently evident that they falsely pretended the name of God.

He adds, thirdly, *Behold, I am against those who prophesy dreams of falsehood.* It was indeed necessary to say here, that though the false teachers arrogated to themselves what alone belonged to the servants of God, they were yet mendacious. He afterwards adds, *They narrate them, and cause my people to err by their falsehoods and their levity.* The meaning is, that however proudly they might have pretended the name of prophets, they were yet impostors, who deceived the people by narrating to them their false dreams. The word *dream* is taken here in a good sense, but the word added to it, shews that they boasted of dreams which were only their own; and this is again confirmed when Jeremiah says, that they deceived the people by *their falsehoods;* and he adds, by *their levity*,[1] which some render "flattery." I

God's words. Or we may consider the taking or using the tongue as meaning only profession, as though it was said, "who profess and say, 'He saith.'"

The *Syr.* is, "who pervert their own tongues," which means that they used them falsely; and the *Targ.*, "who prophesy according to the will of their own heart."—*Ed.*

[1] The word is rendered "errors," by the *Sept.;* "miracles," by the *Vulg.;* "lasciviousness," by the *Syr.;* and "rashness," by the *Targ.* It comes from a verb which means to swell, to overflow. As a feminine noun it is only found here, and as a participial noun in two places, Jud. ix. 4, and Zeph. iii. 4, in which places it evidently means licentious persons; and I once thought that as used here it means licentiousness; see Note on Zeph. iii. 4, in vol. iv. on the Minor Prophets: but I now think that the

doubt not but that it means their inventions, which were vain, because they proceeded only from vain presumption.

He adds, *Though I sent them not nor commanded them.* This negation ought especially to be noticed; for God shews how we are to form a judgment, when a question is raised respecting true and false teachers. Whatever, therefore, is without God's command is like the wind, and will of itself vanish away. There is, then, no solidity in anything but in God's command. Hence it follows, that all those who speak according to their own fancies are mendacious, and that whatever they bring forward has no weight in it; for God sets these two things in opposition the one to the other; on the one side are falsehood and levity, and on the other, his command and his call. It hence follows, that no one, except he simply obeys God and faithfully declares what he has received from him, can be of any account; for his whole weight is lighter than a feather, and all his apparent wisdom is falsehood.

At last he says, that they *would not profit his people.* In which words he warns the people to shun them as the plague. But we see how the world indulges itself in this respect; for they who are drowsy seek to absolve themselves on the plea of ignorance, and throw the blame on their pastors, as though they were themselves beyond the reach of danger. But the Lord here reminded the people, that the teachers whom they received were pestilent; though for another

meaning most suitable here is excess or overflowing in words—vaunting, boasting. The false prophets boasted that they were prophesying in God's name; they were telling lies, and boasting that they were sent by God. In this way they succeeded in leading astray the people. *Venema* renders it "vain boasting."

Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy
Lying dreams, saith Jehovah;
And who declare them, that they may lead astray
My people by their lies and by their vauntings.

Then follows a virtual denial of their vauntings, for God had "not sent" nor "commanded" them; and the conclusion of the verse refers to their lies, for what they said would "not profit" the people. Thus we see a perfect correspondence between what is said in this and in the following verse, and the order is according to the usual style of the Prophets, it being reversed in the latter instance; their vauntings were false, because God did not send them; and their lies were vain, for they would not profit the people.—*Ed.*

reason he testified that they were useless, and that in order that he might shake off the vain confidence of the Jews, who were wont to set up this shield against all God's threatenings, that their false teachers promised them wonderful things. It follows,—

33. And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What *is* the burden of the Lord? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the Lord.

33. Quod si interrogaverint te populus hic, vel Propheta, vel Sacerdos, dicendo, Quod onus Jehovæ? Tunc dices illis, Quod onus? Derelinquam vos, inquit Jehova.

It appears sufficiently evident from this passage,—that the contumacy of the Jews was so great, that they sought from every quarter some excuse for their insensibility, as though they could with impunity despise God when they rejected his word. For the devil by his artifice fascinates the reprobate, when he renders God's word either hateful or contemptible; and whenever he can exasperate their minds, so that they hear not God's word except with disdain and bitterness, he gains fully his object. The Jews, then, were led into such a state of mind, that they regarded God's word with hatred; and they were thus alienated from all docility and from every care for religion. In short, the prophets, as it is well known, everywhere employ the word משא, *mesha*, which means a burden.

Now, a burden means a prophecy, which terrifies the despisers of God by threatening them with vengeance. As, then, their minds were exasperated, they called through hatred the word of God a burden, and used it as a proverbial saying, "It is a burden, a burden." They ought to have been moved by God's threatenings, and to have trembled on hearing that he was angry with them. The word burden, then, ought to have humbled them; but, on the contrary, they became exasperated, first, through haughtiness, then through an indomitable contumacy, and thirdly, they kindled into rage. We hence see how the expression arose, that the prophets called their prophecies burdens. God now severely condemns this fury, because they hesitated not thus openly to shew their insolence. It was surely a most shameful thing, that the word of God should be thus called in disdain

and contempt, in the ways and streets; for they thus acted disdainfully and insolently against God; for it was the same as though they treated his word with open contempt. It was then no wonder that he reproved this fury with so much vehemence, by saying, *But if this people ask thee, What is the burden of Jehovah?*

This manner of asking was altogether derisive, when they said to Jeremiah and to other servants of God, "What is the burden?" that is, "What dost thou bring to us, what trouble is to come on us?" They thus not only spoke contemptuously of God's word, but, as though this wickedness was not sufficient, they became, as I have said, irritated and exasperated. *If*, then, *they ask thee, What is the burden?* And he speaks not only of the common people, but of the very prophets and priests.

We hence learn how great a contempt for God then prevailed, so that there was no integrity either in the priestly or the prophetic order. It is indeed wonderful with what impudence they dared to boast themselves to be God's servants, while they spoke with so much insolence! But the same thing happens in the world in our day; for we see that the ministers of Satan in no other way hold the world under their power, than by alluring the minds of the ungodly; and at the same time they cause God's word to be hated, and say that it brings not only troubles, but also torments. Since, then, these unprincipled men, who thus load with hatred and disdain the true doctrine, occupy pulpits, we need not wonder that the same evil prevailed in the ancient Church.

It follows: *If a prophet or a priest ask thee, What is the burden of Jehovah? thou shalt say to them, What burden? I will forsake thee, saith Jehovah.* This was a most grievous threatening, but it has not been well considered and rightly understood; for interpreters have overlooked the implied contrast between the presence and the absence of God. Nothing could have been more acceptable to the Jews than God's silence. And yet in no other way does he more clearly shew that he is a Father to us, caring for our salvation, than by familiarly addressing us. Whenever, then, the prophetic word is announced, we have a sure and a clear evidence of

God's presence, as though he wished to be connected with us. But when the ungodly not only reject so remarkable a benefit, but also furiously repel, as far as they can, such a favour, they desire and seek the absence of God. Therefore God says, "Ye cannot bear my word, by which symbol I shew that I am present with you; *I will forsake you;*" that is, "I will no longer endure this indignity, but I will depart from you; there shall be hereafter no prophecy."[1]

At the first view this was not deemed grievous to the Jews; for as I have said, the ungodly desire nothing more than that God should be silent, and they thought that they had gained their greatest happiness, when with consciences lulled to sleep they indulged themselves in their filth. It was then their chief wish that God should depart from them. But yet there was nothing more to be dreaded. The Prophet then shews here that they were extremely infatuated and wholly fascinated by the devil, for they could desire nothing more dreadful than that God should depart from them; as though he had said, "My word is a weariness to you, and I in my turn will now avenge myself, for I am weary of forbearing you, when I see that you can by no means be healed; and as I have been hitherto assiduous in instructing you, and have found you unteachable, I will now in my turn leave you." It follows,—

[1] The latter part of the verse is rendered by the *Septuagint*, "Ye are the assumption, (λῆμμα,) I will dash you to pieces, saith the Lord;" by the *Vulgate*, "Ye are the burden, I will surely cast you away, saith the Lord;" by the *Syriac*, "This is the word of the Lord; I will pluck you up, saith the Lord;" and by the *Targum*, "Such is the prophecy; I will cast you away, saith the Lord."

Blayney considers that these words אתכמה משא ought to be thus arranged אתם המשא, consistently with all the Versions and the *Targum;* the letters are the same, only differently connected. This, doubtless, is the right reading, though not found in any MS.; both the Versions and the sense being in its favour. Then as to the verb, the most suitable meaning here is to cast off, as *Blayney* renders it. The verse then would read as follows,—

33. And when ask thee shall this people,
Or a prophet or a priest, saying,
"What is the burden of Jehovah?"
Then say to them, "Ye are the burden;"
And I will cast you off, saith Jehovah.

It was a suitable answer to mockers, who made, as it were, a sport of the true Prophets.—*Ed.*

34. And *as for* the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the Lord, I will even punish that man and his house.

34. Et propheta et sacerdos et populus qui dixerit, Onus Jehovæ, visitabo super virum illum (*hoc est*, quicunque fuerit, sive propheta, sive sacerdos, sive homo quispiam vulgaris, visitabo super virum illum,) et super domum ejus.

Prophecy might indeed have been called a burden, when anything sad was announced; but it might also have been so called, when men were aroused to fear God, or when they were exhorted to repent. But God has a reference here to that wicked impiety, when men dared in ridicule to call any prophecy a burden. And hence it appears, that they were all so given up to their sins, that the very name of God's judgment was hated by them. We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning when he said, that God would punish all those who called his word a burden; for the Prophets themselves were wont to speak thus; and we find that Jeremiah in many places used this word. He does not then speak here generally, but points out, as by the finger, a vice which prevailed; for the Jews had so hardened themselves in hatred to sound doctrine, that they said, "Ho! these Prophets do nothing but terrify us by threatenings and by denouncing ruin on us; and what will be the end of all this?" God says, that he would take punishment on all who thus spoke and on all their families. It hence appears how much he abominated this blasphemy; and hence also we see how precious to God is the honour of his word; for it is not of every kind of sin that God speaks when he extends his vengeance to posterity. It is the same thing as though Jeremiah had said, "It is altogether intolerable, when men became irritated and exasperated against God's word." And yet this evil is not an evil of one age only. We see that the Israelites ever complained of God's rigour; hence that saying, "The ways of the Lord are not tortuous, but rather your ways, O house of Israel." (Ezek. xviii. 25.)

And here we must notice the wickedness of the human mind; for God, as it has been before stated, has nothing else in view by calling us to himself, but to make us partakers of eternal life and salvation. It is then God's design to receive us for the purpose of saving us; this is the end

intended by all the prophets; and hence the Prophet called before the word of God wheat; but what is done by men? They despise this favour; and not only so, but turn food into poison and cease not to provoke God's wrath. He was, therefore, constrained to threaten them. When he finds us teachable, he allures us to himself even with paternal kindness. But when we provoke him to wrath, we in a manner force him to put on another character, according to what he says, that he will be refractory towards the refractory. (Psalm xviii. 26.) Yet we complain when God deals rigidly with us. We cease not to carry on war with him; but when he restrains and checks our insolence, we immediately expostulate with him, as though he were too severe and his word offended us. Whence is this offence? even from our obstinate wickedness. Were men to put an end to their sinful course, the Lord would change his manner of dealing with them, and gently treat them and foster them as chickens under his wings; but this they suffer not; nay, they reject such a treatment as much as they can. Hence it is, that they abhor the name of God and his word. What then is the excuse for the complaint, when they say that God is too rigorous, as though his word were a burden? There is none; for they are themselves refractory against God, and thus his word becomes a hammer to break their heads, to shatter and destroy them. We now see the reason why God not only declares that he was angry with these ungodly despisers of his word, but also denounces the same vengeance on their posterity.[1]

35. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to

35. Sic dicetis quisque ad socium suum, et quisque ad fratrem suum,

[1] The beginning of this verse will read better in connection with the last, in apposition with "you" whom the Lord threatened to cast off,—

Then say to them, "Ye are the burden;"
And I will cast you off, saith Jehovah—
34. Even the prophet and the priest and the people:
Who will say, "The burden of Jehovah,"
Yea, I will punish that man and his house.

Notice here the change of order in the words; in the preceding verse we find "the people and the prophet and the priest;" but here, "the prophet and the priest and the people." Whoever he might be, whether a prophet or a priest or one of the people," that man was to be punished.—*Ed.*

his brother, What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken?

Quid respondit Jehova? et quid locutus est Jehova?

Here the Prophet explains himself more clearly; he shews why God would not have his word to be called a burden. Why so? because they in a manner closed the way, so that they derived no benefit from God's word, while they regarded it with disdain and hatred; for the word burden was an obstacle, so that they gave no access to God, nor opened their ears to hear his word. God then bids them to come with empty and sincere hearts; for it is a real preparation for a teachable spirit, when we acknowledge that we ought to believe in God's word, and also when we are not possessed by a perverse feeling which forms a prejudice and in a manner holds us bound, so that we are not free to form a right judgment.

The import of the passage then is this, that the Jews, renouncing their blasphemies, were to prepare themselves reverently to hear God's word, for hearing is due to God; and then that this word was to be heard with sincere hearts, so that no weariness, nor pride, nor hatred, nor any depraved feeling, might hinder his word from being believed and reverently heard by all. This then is what the Prophet means when he says, "Ye shall hereafter change your impious expression, and shall *say, What has Jehovah answered? what has Jehovah spoken?*" That is, they shall not themselves close the door, but willingly come to the school of God, being meek and teachable, so that nothing would hinder them from rendering honour to God and from embracing his word, that they might be terrified by his threatenings, and that being allured by his promises they might devote themselves wholly to him.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing is better for us or more necessary for our chief happiness, than to depend on thy word, for that is a sure pledge of thy good will towards us,—O grant, that as thou hast favoured us with so singular a benefit, which thou manifestest to us daily, we may be attentive to hear thee and

submit ourselves to thee in true fear, meekness, and humility, so that we may be prepared in the spirit of meekness to receive whatever proceeds from thee, and that thus thy word may not only be precious to us, but also sweet and delightful, until we shall enjoy the perfection of that life, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-First.

36. And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention no more; for every man's word shall be his burden: for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.

36. Et oneris Jehovæ non recordabimini amplius, quia onus erit cuique sermo ejus; et pervertistis sermones Dei vivi, Jehovæ exercituum, Dei nostri.

JEREMIAH goes on with the same subject, that every one ought calmly and meekly to hear God speaking. He said, as we saw yesterday, that the prophets were to be asked as to what God had spoken and what he had answered; he thereby intimated that there must be docility, in order that God's word may obtain credit, authority, and favour among us. He again repeats, that the word burden could not be endured by God; for, as we explained yesterday, this word was used commonly by the Jews as expressive of hatred or disdain, being as they were unwilling to receive sound doctrine.

In forbidding them to mention the word *burden*, it was the same thing as though he had said, "Let not this form of speaking be any longer in use among you." He then adds, *For to every one his word shall be his burden.* By these words he shews that what is bitter in prophecies is as it were accidental; for God has nothing else in view in addressing men, but to call them to salvation. The word of God then in itself ought to be deemed sweet and delightful. Whence then is this bitterness and hatred towards it? even from the wickedness of men alone. As when a sick person, eating the most wholesome food finds it turned into poison, the cause being in himself; so it is with us, it is our own fault that the word of God becomes a burden. It was, moreover, the Prophet's design to shew that the Jews had no reason to complain that prophecies were grievous to them,

and always announced some trouble; for God wishes to address men with lenity and kindness, but he is forced by their wickedness to deal sharply with them. The Prophet seems, however, to go still farther, as though he had said, "Though prophecies should cease, yet every one shall be a prophet to himself; for as they murmur against God, and cannot bear his judgment, however silent God's ministers may be, they will yet afford a sufficient cause for condemnation, who dare thus to rise up against God."

We now see the design of the Prophet in saying, *Ye shall no more mention the burden of Jehovah;* that is, "This shameful proverb, which brands God's word with disgrace, shall no more be used by you; this wicked practice shall cease, *for else to every one of you his word shall be a burden;*" so the causal particle כִּי, *ki*, is to be rendered. But if another sense be preferred, I feel no objection, that is, that they ought to have considered the reason why God did not deal more mildly with them; which was, because they were of a perverse disposition, and thus they refused the paternal kindness which he was prepared to shew, provided they received it.[1]

[1] This sentence, as given by the *Sept.* and *Vulg.*, bears the meaning first mentioned by *Calvin*, but another, as given by the *Syr.*, "for the word, let it be to man his prophecy," that is, the Lord's prophecy. The meaning of which seems to be, that the burden, or prophecy, ought to be deemed by every man as the word of God, or ought to be called his word; it was no longer to be called burden, but God's word.

According to *Calvin* and many others, the meaning is, "the word, or the phrase," the burden of the Lord, "which ye use in derision, shall really be a burden to you." The כִּי in this case must be rendered else or otherwise. But the following words do not well connect; and as punishment in case of disregarding the injunction here given is afterwards especially specified, to mention it here seems improper. I am therefore inclined to regard the two last clauses as including reasons for the prohibition; and I give this version,—

36. And "the burden of Jehovah" ye shall no more mention;
For the burden, it is become to every one his word;
And ye have perverted the words of the living God,
Of Jehovah of hosts, our God.

The word burden was used by all, it had become a common word; and by using it in derision, they turned the words of the living God into contempt, instead of receiving them as his words and obeying them. This was the process, they first ridiculed them, and then despised and neglected them. Hence God prohibited the use of the expression, "the burden of Jehovah." The only objection to the rendering above is, that יהוה,

This passage is entitled to special notice, for we see how the greater part cannot bear threatenings and terrors when announced to them. Hence they entertain contempt and hatred towards heavenly doctrine; and yet none consider why God so often threatens and terrifies them in his word. For if men ceased to sin, God would cease to contend with them; but when they continually provoke him, is he to be silent? and further, are his prophets to suffer everything just to be violated, and God himself to be despised? Let us then know that the fault is in us when God seems to deal rigidly with us, for we do not allow him to use such a paternal language as he always would, were it not that we put a hinderance in the way.

The Prophet also adds, *For ye have corrupted the words of the living God, of Jehovah of hosts our God.* So ought the words to be rendered. Here he justly accuses them, that they perverted the words of God, and in two ways, because they constrained God by their wickedness to speak otherwise than he wished, and also, because they were preposterous interpreters of his dealings. For though God may severely chastise us, yet it is our duty to receive his reproofs with a meek spirit, as they are necessary for us; but when we murmur and become refractory, we pervert the word of God. We hence see that the word of God is not only perverted in one way, but when we furiously oppose him, we prevent him to deal gently and kindly with us; and we do the same when we submit not to his reproofs, but rage against him whenever he summons us to judgment. And as their wantonness was in this instance so great, the Prophet here sets up against them in express terms the power of God.

He says first, that he is the *living God;* and by this term he reminded them that the ungodly, who vomited thus their blasphemies against him, would not go unpunished; "See," he says, "with whom ye have to do; for you contend with the living God; this audacity will rebound on your own

a future, is rendered as a present, "it is become;" but this is what is often done. Besides, וַיְ is sometimes conversive as well as the וְ.—*Ed.*

heads; ye then carry on a fatal war." He, secondly, adds, that he is *Jehovah of hosts;* by which expression he again shews his power. And, thirdly, he says, that he is the *God* of that people; as though he had said, that not only their impiety was madness in daring to contend with God, but that it was also connected with ingratitude; for God had adopted them as his people, and had promised to be their God.

We now then see the design of the Prophet; he first warned them not to entertain hatred in their hearts to prophetic doctrine; secondly, he shewed that the whole fault was in themselves, as they constrained God to deal severely with them; and further, that they perverted the word of God, being false interpreters of it, and closing the door against his kindness when he invited all the pious and the teachable; and lastly, he exalts God's power and commends his goodness, that he might thus aggravate the sin of the people in daring to carry on war with God himself, and in despising the favour conferred on them. It follows,—

37. Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the Lord answered thee? and, What hath the Lord spoken?

37. Sic dices Prophetæ, Quid respondit tibi Jehova? et quid locutus est tibi Jehova?

He repeats what we noticed yesterday, and almost in the same words. The meaning is, that if we desire to profit in God's school, we must beware lest our minds be preoccupied by any corrupt feeling. For whence is it that God's word is not savoured by us, or excites in us a bitter spirit? even because we are infected by some sinful lust or passion which wholly corrupts our judgment. God then would have us to come to him free from every vicious disposition, and to be so teachable as to inquire only what he teaches, what he may answer to us; for whosoever becomes thus disentangled and free, will doubtless find the prophetic doctrine to be for his benefit. There is then but one cause why God's word does not profit us, but on the contrary is injurious and fatal to us, and that is, because we seek not what God speaks, that is, because we are not teachable, nor come to learn, but either sloth, or contempt, or ingratitude, or perverseness, or something of this kind, bears rule in us.

Now he says here, that the prophets ought to be asked as to *what God speaks*, or as to *what he may answer*.[1] In these words he exculpates God's faithful servants; for if a hearer is ready to obey, he will find from a faithful teacher what may justly please and do him good. In short, he shews that there is nothing wrong in the prophets when their doctrine does not please us, but that this happens because we do not regard what Jeremiah here reminds us of, that we ought to hear God that we may learn, and that we may obey his voice. It follows,—

38. But since ye say, The burden of the Lord; therefore thus saith the Lord, Because ye say this word, The burden of the Lord, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the Lord;

39. Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, *and cast you* out of my presence.

38. Quod si onus Jehovæ dixeritis, propterea sic dicit Jehova, Ne dicatis hoc verbum (*hoc est*, ne proferatis hunc sermonem) onus Jehovæ; et misi ad vos (*sed debet resolvi oratio*, quum miserim ad vos,) et ne dicatis, onus Jehovæ:

39. Propterea ecce ego et tollam vos tollendo (*vel*, obliviscar vestri obliviscendo, *ut alii vertunt; tertia est sententia*, obliviscar vestri, ut tollam, *vel*, ad tollendum,) et evellam vos (*vel*, projiciam, *melius; alii vertunt*, relinquam, *male*,) et urbem hanc, quam dedi vobis et patribus vestris, a facie mea.

Here the Prophet confirms what he had said, for God might have seemed to be too indignant, having been so grievously offended at one short expression. The Jews had borrowed from the prophets themselves, when they called prophecies burdens, as we have already said, and as we find in many places. Now as the lubricity of language is great, though the Jews might have done wrong as to one word, it might yet have appeared an insufficient reason for the punishment which God threatened to inflict. But the Prophet here shews that God was justly angry with them, for he had sent to them, and often warned them not to use this form of speaking, which was a manifest evidence of their impiety. As then they had thus disregarded God and his warnings,

[1] "Thus shalt thou say to the Prophet," that is, every one of you. The singular is used, as is the case often, instead of the plural. The *Syr.* indeed adopts the plural, "Thus shall ye say," &c. They are here directed how to address a Prophet.—*Ed.*

was it an excusable mistake? In short, Jeremiah shews that they had not erred inconsiderately, as it often happens as to those who speak rashly and thoughtlessly, but that this perverted way of speaking proceeded from determined wickedness, from a wish to affix some mark of disgrace to God's word; and thus they acted in disdain towards God himself. This then is the import of the words.

If ye shall say, even when I warn you not to speak in this manner; if then ye persevere in this obstinacy, ***Behold I***, &c.; God here declares that he would take vengeance. As to this sentence, most interpreters derive the verb from נָשָׂה, *nushe*, making ה, *he*, the final letter; but I doubt the correctness of this; yet if this explanation be adopted, we must still hold that the Prophet alludes to the verb, to take away, which immediately follows. But I am disposed to take another view, that God would by *removing remove them*. It must be noticed that the word מַשָּׂא, *mesha*, which has often been mentioned, comes from the same root; מַשָּׂא, *mesha*, a burden, is derived from נָשָׂא, *nusha*, to remove or take away. As therefore this proverb was commonly used, that prophetic doctrine ever brought some burden and trouble, God answers, "I will take you away;" that is, "ye shall find by experience how grievous and burdensome your wickedness is to me, it shall rebound on your heads; ye have burdened and treated with indignity my word, and I will treat you with indignity," but in what manner? *I will take you away even by taking you away*. If any one approves more of the sense of forgetting, let him follow his own judgment; but that explanation appears to me unmeaning, "I will forget you," except נָשָׂא, *nusha*, be taken in the second place as signifying to take away. "I will forget you, that I may take you away."[1]

[1] The variety in the Versions as to this clause, and the different constructions given of it by expositors, seem to intimate some derangement in the text, and the text itself as it now exists, (and there are no different readings,) is not according to the Hebrew idiom; for הִנֵּנִי, "behold me," is commonly, if not uniformly, followed by a participle and then by a verb, preceded by ו conversive in the past tense. See ch. ix. 7; x. 18; xvi. 16. This is not the case here. Besides, when a verb, and the same verb as a gerund are put together, which is no uncommon thing, the gerund in general, if not always, precedes the verb; not so here, if we take נָשׂוֹא, as

He adds, *And I will pluck you up;* which some render, "I will forsake you," but they seem not to understand what the Prophet intended; for he declares something more grievous and more dreadful than before, when he says, *I will pluck you up;* and yet this sense does not satisfy me. The verb נטש, *nuthash*, means to extend, and metaphorically to cast far off; and casting off or away seems to suit the passage best. God then would not only remove or take away the Jews from their own place, but would also cast them far off into distant countries. He thus denounces on them an exile, by which they were to be driven as it were into another world. For had they dwelt in the neighbourhood, it would have been more tolerable to them, but as they were to be driven away, as by a violent storm to the farthest and remotest regions, it was much more grievous.

He afterwards says, *And the city also which I gave to you and to your fathers.* The verbs, to cast away and to pluck up, do not well suit stones; but as to the sense, it may rightly be said that God would take away the city with its inhabitants, as though they were driven away by the wind. And this was added designedly, for the Jews relying on this promise, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell," thought it impossible that the sanctuary of God would ever be destroyed. As then this vain confidence deceived them, that the city which God had chosen as his habitation would stand always, the Prophet expressly adds that the city itself would perish.

And it is also added, that it was *given* to them and their

most do, to be from נשא. These anomalies are evident in the text as it now stands. Suppose the misplacing of one word, and put נשא after הנני, and the sentence will be perfectly grammatical, and the version would be as follows,—

Therefore, behold, I will carry off and let you go;
Yea, I will dismiss you and the city,
Which I gave to you and to your fathers,
From my presence.

Alluding to burden, he says that he would carry them off as one carries a burden, and then let them go, or throw them down: the verb נשה means to loosen, to disengage one's self from a thing, to remit, to let go. Then נטש has a similar meaning, to set loose, to relax, to set free, to dismiss, to cast off; which intimates that he would not suffer them to continue as it were in his presence. It is the same verb as in verse 33.—*Ed.*

his brother, What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken?

Quid respondit Jehova? et quid loquutus est Jehova?

Here the Prophet explains himself more clearly; he shews why God would not have his word to be called a burden. Why so? because they in a manner closed the way, so that they derived no benefit from God's word, while they regarded it with disdain and hatred; for the word burden was an obstacle, so that they gave no access to God, nor opened their ears to hear his word. God then bids them to come with empty and sincere hearts; for it is a real preparation for a teachable spirit, when we acknowledge that we ought to believe in God's word, and also when we are not possessed by a perverse feeling which forms a prejudice and in a manner holds us bound, so that we are not free to form a right judgment.

The import of the passage then is this, that the Jews, renouncing their blasphemies, were to prepare themselves reverently to hear God's word, for hearing is due to God; and then that this word was to be heard with sincere hearts, so that no weariness, nor pride, nor hatred, nor any depraved feeling, might hinder his word from being believed and reverently heard by all. This then is what the Prophet means when he says, "Ye shall hereafter change your impious expression, and shall *say, What has Jehovah answered? what has Jehovah spoken?*" That is, they shall not themselves close the door, but willingly come to the school of God, being meek and teachable, so that nothing would hinder them from rendering honour to God and from embracing his word, that they might be terrified by his threatenings, and that being allured by his promises they might devote themselves wholly to him.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing is better for us or more necessary for our chief happiness, than to depend on thy word, for that is a sure pledge of thy good will towards us,—O grant, that as thou hast favoured us with so singular a benefit, which thou manifestest to us daily, we may be attentive to hear thee and

submit ourselves to thee in true fear, meekness, and humility, so that we may be prepared in the spirit of meekness to receive whatever proceeds from thee, and that thus thy word may not only be precious to us, but also sweet and delightful, until we shall enjoy the perfection of that life, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-First.

36. And the burden of the Lord shall ye mention no more; for every man's word shall be his burden: for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.

36. Et oneris Jehovæ non recordabimini amplius, quia onus erit cuique sermo ejus; et pervertistis sermones Dei vivi, Jehovæ exercituum, Dei nostri.

JEREMIAH goes on with the same subject, that every one ought calmly and meekly to hear God speaking. He said, as we saw yesterday, that the prophets were to be asked as to what God had spoken and what he had answered; he thereby intimated that there must be docility, in order that God's word may obtain credit, authority, and favour among us. He again repeats, that the word burden could not be endured by God; for, as we explained yesterday, this word was used commonly by the Jews as expressive of hatred or disdain, being as they were unwilling to receive sound doctrine.

In forbidding them to mention the word *burden*, it was the same thing as though he had said, "Let not this form of speaking be any longer in use among you." He then adds, *For to every one his word shall be his burden.* By these words he shews that what is bitter in prophecies is as it were accidental; for God has nothing else in view in addressing men, but to call them to salvation. The word of God then in itself ought to be deemed sweet and delightful. Whence then is this bitterness and hatred towards it? even from the wickedness of men alone. As when a sick person, eating the most wholesome food finds it turned into poison, the cause being in himself; so it is with us, it is our own fault that the word of God becomes a burden. It was, moreover, the Prophet's design to shew that the Jews had no reason to complain that prophecies were grievous to them,

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This passage is entitled to special notice, for we see how the greater part cannot bear threatenings and terrors when announced to them. Hence they entertain contempt and hatred towards heavenly doctrine; and yet none consider why God so often threatens and terrifies them in his word. For if men ceased to sin, God would cease to contend with them; but when they continually provoke him, is he to be silent? and further, are his prophets to suffer everything just to be violated, and God himself to be despised? Let us then know that the fault is in us when God seems to deal rigidly with us, for we do not allow him to use such a paternal language as he always would, were it not that we put a hinderance in the way.

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He says first, that he is the *living God;* and by this term he reminded them that the ungodly, who vomited thus their blasphemies against him, would not go unpunished; "See," he says, "with whom ye have to do; for you contend with the living God; this audacity will rebound on your own

a future, is rendered as a present, "it is become;" but this is what is often done. Besides, וַ is sometimes conversive as well as the וְ.—*Ed.*

fathers. He anticipates all objections, and shakes off from the Jews the vain hope by which they were inebriated, even that the city was given perpetually to them, and that God resided there to defend them; "This donation," he says, "will not keep you nor the city itself from destruction." He adds, *From my presence;* for it was customary for them to pretend God's name, when they sought to harden their hearts against the threatenings of the prophets; but God here answers them and says, *From my presence;* as though he had said, "In vain do ye harbour the thought respecting the perpetuity of the city and the Temple; for this depends on my will and good pleasure. As ye then stand or fall as it seems right to me, I now declare that ye shall be ejected and wholly removed from my presence." It follows,—

40. And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

40. Et ponam super vos opprobrium æternum, et opprobria (*est quidem aliud verbum*, dedecora) æterna, quod oblivioni non tradetur (*potest referri ad utrunque membrum: nam in plurali numero ponit* כלמות,[1] *et postea addit verbum singulare*, oblivioni non tradetur; *sed potest, quemadmodum dixi, hoc extendi ad totum complexum.*)

What is here contained is, that though the Jews justly gloried for a time in being the peculiar people of God, yet this would avail them nothing, as they had divested themselves of that honour in which they had excelled, by the abnegation of true religion. Here then the Prophet strips the Jews of that foolish boasting with which they were inflated when they said that they were the people of God, and threatens that God having taken away their glory would make them lie under perpetual shame.

We at the same time know, that such threatenings are to

[1] It is singular in three MSS., and in all the early Versions, and the *Targum;* and the verb which follows requires it to be so,—

40. And I will bring on you a perpetual reproach,
And a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

The word for "shame" is stronger than that for "reproach," as *Parkhurst* tells us; but shame is the feeling, and is rendered sometimes confusion, and reproach is what is outwardly disgraceful. The *Sept.* and *Vulg.* have reproach and disgrace, by which the distinction is not marked. The reproach or disgrace was to be such as to create such a shame as would never be forgotten. The outward reproach is mentioned first, and then the shame that it would occasion.—*Ed.*

be restricted as to time, they extend only to the coming of Christ; for the Church of God could not have been doomed to eternal reproach. But as to hypocrites, as there was no repentance, so they never obtained pardon; but God delivered his own from eternal reproach when Christ the Redeemer appeared; yet these words are to be understood as rightly addressed to the ungodly despisers of God. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. The Lord shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs *were* set before the temple of the Lord, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

2. One basket *had* very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* first ripe; and the other basket *had* very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

1. Videre me fecit (ostendit mihi visionem) Jehova, et ecce duo calathi ficuum positi coram Templo Jehovæ, postquam transtulerat Nebuchadnezer, rex Babylonis, Jechoniam, filium Joakim, regem Jehudah, et principes Jehudah, et artificem et inclusorem (*vel*, sculptorem[1]) e Jerusalem, et abduxerat eos Babylonem:

2. Calathus unus ficuum bonarum valde, sicuti sunt ficus præcoces; et alter calathus ficuum malarum valde, quæ non comederentur propter malitiam (*hoc est*, adeo malæ erant.)

The meaning of this vision is, that there was no reason for the ungodly to flatter themselves if they continued in their

[1] What this word exactly means it is difficult to know; it is rendered differently in the Versions and in the *Targ.* It is rendered here by the *Sept.* "prisoners," and in 2 Kings xxiv. 14 and 16, "encloser, or joiner—συγκλείων;" by the *Vulg.* in three places, "clausor," and "inclusor—closer and incloser," and also in Jer. xxix. 2. The word is not found elsewhere. The *Targ.* renders it "porters," and the *Syr.* "soldiers." As the word "artificer," or mechanic, includes workers in wood and iron, that is, carpenters and smiths, it is probable that חָרָשׁ means workers in embroidery, sculpture, and jewellery. *Parkhurst* was disposed to render it a *setter*, or incloser of precious stones; but *Blayney* renders it an *armourer*, who made the coats of mail which inclosed the body, as the word from which it comes means to inclose. It probably includes all engaged in the curious works of art, especially the three branches before mentioned. Perhaps the best modern word for it would be, the *artist*,—

—"after Nebuchadrezar, the king of Babylon, removed Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, and the mechanic and the artist, from Jerusalem, and brought them to Babylon."—*Ed.*

wickedness, though God did bear with them for a time. The King Jeconiah had been then carried away into exile, together with the chief men and artisans. The condition of the king and of the rest appeared indeed much worse than that of the people who remained in the country, for they still retained a hope that the royal dignity would again be restored, and that the city would flourish again and enjoy abundance of every blessing, though it was then nearly emptied; for everything precious had become a prey to the conqueror; and we indeed know how great was the avarice and rapacity of Nebuchadnezzar. The city then was at that time almost empty, and desolate in comparison with its former splendour. They however who remained might indeed have hoped for a better state of things, but those who had gone into exile were become like dead bodies. Hence miserable Jeconiah, who was banished and deprived of his kingdom, was apparently undergoing a most grievous punishment, together with his companions, who had been led away with him; and the Jews who remained at Jerusalem no doubt flattered themselves, as though God had dealt more kindly with them. Had they really repented, they would indeed have given thanks to God for having spared them; but as they had abused his forbearance, it was necessary to set before them what this chapter contains, even that they foolishly reasoned when they concluded, that God had been more propitious to them than to the rest.

But this is shewn by a vision: the Prophet saw two baskets or flaskets; and he saw them full of figs, and that before the temple of God; but the figs in one were sweet and savoury; and the figs in the other were bitter, so that they could not be eaten. By the sweet figs God intended to represent Jeconiah and the other exiles, who had left their country: and he compares them to the ripe figs; for ripe figs have a sweet taste, while the other figs are rejected on account of their bitterness. In like manner, Jeconiah and the rest had as it were been consumed; but there were figs still remaining; and he says that the lot of those was better whom God had in due time punished, than of the others who remained, as they were accumulating a heavier judg-

ment by their obstinacy. For since the time that Nebuchadnezzar had spoiled the city and had taken from it everything valuable, those who remained had not ceased to add sins to sins, so that there was a larger portion of divine vengeance ready to fall on them.

We now see the design of this vision. And he says that the vision was presented to him by God; and to say this was very necessary, that his doctrine might have more weight with the people. God, indeed, often spoke without a vision; but we have elsewhere stated what was the design of a vision; it was a sort of seal to what was delivered; for in order that the Prophet might possess greater authority, they not only spoke, but as it were sealed their doctrine, as though God had graven on it, as it were by his finger, a certain mark. But as this subject has been elsewhere largely handled, I shall now pass it by.

Behold, he says, *two baskets of figs set before the temple.*[1] The place ought to be noticed. It may have been that the Prophet was not allowed to move a step from his own house; and the vision may have been presented to him in the night, during thick darkness: but the temple being mentioned, shews that a part of the people had not been taken away without cause, and the other part left in the city; for it had proceeded from God himself. For in the temple God manifested himself; and therefore the prophets, when they wished to storm the hearts of the ungodly, often said, "Go forth shall God from his temple." (Isaiah xxvi. 21; Mic. i. 3.) The temple then is to be taken here for the tribunal of God. Hence, he says, that these two baskets were set in the temple; as though he said, that the whole people stood at God's tribunal, and that those who had been already cast into exile had not been carried away at the will of their enemies, but because God designed to punish them.

The time also is mentioned, *After Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim had been carried away;* for had not this been added, the vision would have been obscure, and no one at this day could understand why God had set two baskets in the pre-

[1] *Blayney's* rendering is "offered according to law before the temple." See Deut. xxvi. 2.—*Ed.*

sence of Jeremiah. A distinction then is made here between the exiles and those who dwelt in their own country; and at the same time they were reduced to great poverty, and the city was deprived of its splendour; there was hardly any magnificence in the Temple, the royal palace was spoiled, and the race of David only reigned by permission. But though the calamity of the city and people was grievous, yet, as it has been said, the Jews who remained in the city thought themselves in a manner happy in comparison with their brethren, who were become as it were dead; for God had ejected the king, and he was treated disdainfully as a captive, and the condition of the others was still worse. This difference then between the captives and those who remained in the land is what is here represented.

He now adds, that one *basket* had *very good figs*, and that the other had *very bad figs*. If it be asked whether Jeconiah was in himself approved by God, the answer is easy,—that he was suffering punishment for his sins. Then the Prophet speaks here comparatively, when he calls some good and others bad. We must also notice, that he speaks not here of persons but of punishment; as though he had said, "ye feel a dread when those exiles are mentioned, who have been deprived of the inheritance promised them by God: this seems hard to you; but this is moderate when ye consider what end awaits you." He then does not call Jeconiah and other captives good in themselves; but he calls them good figs, because God had chastened them more gently than he intended to chastise Zedekiah and the rest. Thus he calls the Jews who remained bad figs, not only for this reason, because they were more wicked, though this was in part the reason, but he had regard to the punishment that was nigh at hand; for the severity of God was to be greater towards those whom he had spared, and against whom he had not immediately executed his vengeance. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. The rest we shall defer to the next Lecture.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou delayest with so much forbearance the punishments which we have deserved, and daily draw on ourselves,—O grant, that we may not indulge ourselves, but carefully consider how often, and in how many different ways we have provoked thy wrath against us, that we may thus learn humbly to present ourselves to thee for pardon, and with true repentance so implore thy mercy, that we may from the heart desire wholly to submit ourselves to thee, that whether thou chastisest us, or, according to thine infinite goodness, forgivest us, our condition may be ever blessed, not by flattering ourselves in our torpitude, but by finding thee to be our kind and bountiful Father, being reconciled to us in thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Second.

3. Then said the Lord unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

4. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

5. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for *their* good.

3. Et dixit Jehova ad me, Quid tu vides Jeremiah? et dixi, Ficus, ficus bonas, bonas valde; et malas, malas valde, quæ non comedantur propter malitiam.

4. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad me, dicendo,

5. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, Sicuti ficus bonæ istæ, sic agnoscam captivitatem Jehudah, quem emisi ex hoc loco in terram Chaldæorum ad beneficentiam.

In the last Lecture we began to explain the meaning of the vision which the Prophet relates. We said that the miserable exiles whose condition might have appeared to be the worst, are yet compared to good figs, and that those who still remained in the country are compared to bad and bitter figs. We have explained why God shewed this vision to his servant Jeremiah, even because the captives might have otherwise been driven to despair, especially through the weariness of delay, for they saw that their brethren were still in possession of the inheritance granted them by God, while they were driven into a far country, and as it were disinherited, so that no one could regard them as God's

people. As then despair might have overwhelmed their minds, God designed to give them some comfort. On the other hand, those who remained in the land not only exulted over the miserable exiles, but also abused the forbearance of God, so that they obstinately resisted all threatenings, and thus hardened themselves more and more against God's judgment. Hence God declares what was remotest from what was commonly thought, that they had a better lot who lived captives in Babylon than those who remained quietly as it were in their own nest.

We have said that the badness of the figs is not to be explained of guilt, but of punishment: and this is what Jeremiah confirms, when he says, *As these good figs, so will I acknowledge the captivity for good*, or for beneficence, טוֹבָה, *thube*. It is well known that captivity means the persons led captive, it being a collective word. Then he says, "I will acknowledge the captives of Judah, whom I have driven from this people, so as to do them good again."[1] As this doctrine was then incredible, God calls the attention of the Jews to the final issue; as though he had said, that they were mistaken who took only a present view of things, and did not extend their thoughts to the hope of mercy. For they thus reasoned, "It is better to remain in the country where God is worshipped, where the Temple is and the altar, than to live among heathen nations; it is better to have some liberty than to be under the yoke of tyranny; it is better to retain even the name of being a separate people than to be scattered here and there, so as not to be a community at all." Hence, according to their state at that time, they thought their condition better: but God corrected this wrong judgment; for they ought to have looked to the end, and what awaited the exiles and captives as well as those whom the king of Babylon had for a time spared. Though, indeed, it was the Prophet's object to alleviate the grief of those who had been led away into Chaldea, yet he

[1] The word "acknowledge," or own, would lead us to attach rather a different meaning to this expression: God would own them "good," as the good figs. The next verse refers to God's purpose to do them good. —*Ed.*

had a special regard to the people over whom he was appointed an instructor and teacher. He was then at Jerusalem; and we know how perverse were those whom he had to contend with, for none could have been more obstinate than that people. As God had delayed his punishment, they supposed that they had wholly escaped, especially as they had an uncle as a successor to their captive king.

Hence, then, was their contempt of threatenings; hence was their greater liberty in sinning: they thought that God had taken vengeance on the exiles, and that they were saved as being the more excellent portion of the community. The Prophet, therefore, in order to break down this presumption, which he could not bend, set before them this vision, which had been given him from above. We now, then, see that the doctrine especially set forth is, that God would remember the captives for the purpose of doing them good, as though he had said that a wrong judgment was formed of the calamity of a few years, and that the end was to be looked to. It follows—

6. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull *them* down; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up.	6. Et ponam (*vel*, adjiciam) oculum meum super eos in beneficentiam, et reducam eos ad terram hanc, et ædificabo eos et non diruam, et plantabo eos et non evellam.

He confirms what he said in the last verse, but in other words, for it was difficult to persuade them that they were happier who were apparently lost, than those who still enjoyed some measure of safety. He had said that he would *acknowledge* them; but he now adds, *I will set my eye upon them.* He uses a metaphor which often occurs in Scripture, for God is said to turn away his face when he hides his favour; and in the same sense he is said to forget, to depart, not to care, to despise, to cast away. Then, as God might have seemed to have no more any care for this people, he says, "I will set my eyes on them." But he goes even farther, for he refers to the sentence announced in the last verse—he had said that he was the author of their exile, "I have cast them into the land of the Chaldeans;" but he now confirms the same thing, though in other words, when he

says, "Mine eyes will I set on them *for good.*" For God is said to visit men, not only when he manifests his favour towards them, but also when he chastises them and punishes them for their sins. He had then set his eyes on them to execute punishment; he says now that he would act differently, that he would kindly treat the miserable.

He afterwards says, *I will restore them.* For, as he had sent them away, it was in his power to restore them. As, then, he could heal the wound inflicted by his own hand, this promise ought to have been sufficient to dispel every doubt from the minds of the captives as to their return; and further, the Jews, who as yet remained in Jerusalem and in the land of Judah, ought to have known that they in vain boasted in their good lot, as though God treated them better than their captive brethren, for it was in his power to restore those whom he had banished.

And he adds, *I will build and not pull them down, I will plant and not pluck them up.* This mode of speaking would not be so significant either in Latin or in Greek; but such a repetition, as it is well known, often occurs in Hebrew. But whenever a negative is added to an affirmative, such form of expression is to be thus interpreted, "I shall be so far from plucking them up, that I will plant them; I shall be so far from pulling them down, that I will build them up;" or, "since I had pulled them down, I will now build them up; since I had plucked them up, I will now plant them:" or a perpetuity may be meant, as though God had said, "I will plant them, so as not to pluck them again; I will build them, so as not to pull them down again." But the most frequent import of such expressions is what I first mentioned, "I will not pull them down, but on the contrary build them up; I will not pluck them up, but on the contrary plant them."

The meaning of the whole is, that however sad might be the calamities of the people in Chaldea, they being as exiles reduced to a desolate condition, yet God could collect them again, like one who plants a tree or builds a house. The metaphor of building is common in Scripture, and also that of planting. God is said to plant men, when he introduces a certain order among them, or when he allots to them a

certain place to dwell in, or when he grants them peace and quietness. God is said in Psalm xliv. 2, to have planted his people; but I will not refer to the many passages which are everywhere to be met with. God often says that he had planted his vineyard. (Isaiah v. 2, &c.) And then well known is this passage, "The branch of the Lord, and the planting for his glory." (Isaiah lx. 21.) This is said of the preservation of the Church.

The meaning then is, that though God severely chastised the exiles who had been led into Chaldea, yet their condition was not to be estimated by one day, or a month, or a few years, but that a happy end was to be expected. And as God intended at length to shew himself reconcilable and propitious, it follows that the calamity which had happened to them was lighter than that which awaited the rest, who resolutely despised God and his prophets, and thus increased the vengeance which had been already denounced on them. It follows,—

7. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.	7. Et dabo illis cor ad cognoscendum me, quod ego sum Jehova; et erunt mihi in populum, et ego ero ipsis in Deum, quia revertentur ad me in toto corde suo.

Here is added the main benefit, that God would not only restore the captives, that they might dwell in the land of promise, but would also change them inwardly; for except God gives us a conviction as to our own sins, and then leads us by his Spirit to repentance, whatever benefits he may bestow on us, they will only conduce to our greater ruin. The Prophet has hitherto spoken of the alleviation of punishment, as though he had said, "God will stretch forth his hand to restore his people to their own country." Then the remission of punishment is what has been hitherto promised; but now the Prophet speaks of a much more excellent favour, that God would not only mitigate punishment, but that he would also inwardly change and reform their hearts, so that they would not only return to their own country, but would also become a true Church, a name of which they had vainly boasted. For though they had been chosen to be a peculiar people, yet, as they had departed

from true religion, they were only a Church in name. But now God promises that he would bring them, not only to enjoy temporal and fading blessings, but also eternal salvation, for they would truly fear and serve him.

And this is what we ought carefully to observe, for the more bountiful God is towards men, the more is his vengeance kindled by ingratitude. What, then, would it avail us to abound in all good things, except we had evidences of God's paternal favour towards us? But when we regard this end, that God testifies to us that he is our Father by his bounty towards us, we then make a right use of all his blessings; and God's benefits cannot conduce to our salvation except we regard them in this light. Hence Jeremiah, after having spoken of the people's restoration, justly exalts this favour above everything else, that the people would repent, so that they would not only fully partake of all the blessings they could expect, but would also worship God in sincerity and truth.

Now, God says that he would *give them a heart to know him.* The word heart is to be taken here for the mind or understanding, as it means often in Hebrew. It, indeed, means frequently the seat of the affections, and also the soul of man, as including reason or understanding and will. But though the heart is taken often for the seat of the affections, it is yet applied to designate the other part of the soul, according to these words, "Hitherto God has not given thee a heart to understand." (Deut. xxix. 4.) The Latins sometimes take it in this sense, according to what Cicero shews when he quotes these words of Ennius, "Catus Ælius Sextus was a man remarkable in understanding." (*Egregie cordatus;* Cic. 1 Tuscul.) Then, in this passage, the word heart is put for the light of the understanding. Yet another thing must be stated, that a true knowledge of God is not, as they say, imaginary, but is ever connected with a right feeling.

From the words of the Prophet we learn that repentance is the peculiar gift of God. Had Jeremiah said only that they who had been previously driven by madness into ruin, would return to a sane mind, he might have appeared

as one setting up free-will and putting conversion in the power of man himself, according to what the Papists hold, who dream that we can turn to either side, to good as well as to evil; and thus they imagine that we can, after having forsaken God, of ourselves turn to him. But the Prophet clearly shews here, that it is God's peculiar gift; for what God claims for himself, he surely does not take away from men, as though he intended to deprive them of any right which may belong to them, according to what the Pelagians hold, who seem to think that God appears almost envious when he declares that man's conversion is in his power; but this is nothing less than a diabolical madness. It is, then, enough for us to know, that what God claims for himself is not taken away from men, for it is not in their power.

Since, then, he affirms that he would *give* them *a heart* to understand, we hence learn that men are by nature blind, and also that when they are blinded by the devil, they cannot return to the right way, and that they cannot be otherwise capable of light than by having God to illuminate them by his Spirit. We then see that man, from the time he fell, cannot rise again until God stretches forth his hand not only to help him, (as the Papists say, for they dare not claim to themselves the whole of repentance, but they halve it between themselves and God,) but even to do the whole work from the beginning to the end; for God is not called the helper in repentance, but the author of it. God, then, does not say, "I will help them, so that when they raise up their eyes to me, they shall be immediately assisted;" no, he does not say this; but what he says is, "I will give them a heart to understand." And as understanding or knowledge is the main thing in repentance, it follows that man remains wholly under the power of the devil, and is, as it were, his slave, until God draws him forth from his miserable bondage. In short, we must maintain, that as soon as the devil draws us from the right way of salvation, nothing can come to our minds but what sinks us more and more in ruin, until God interposes, and thus restore us when thinking of no such thing.

This passage also shews, that we cannot really turn to God

until we acknowledge him to be the Judge; for until the sinner sets himself before God's tribunal, he will never be touched with the feeling of true repentance. Let us then know that the door of repentance is then opened to us, when God constrains us to look to him. At the same time there is more included in the term *Jehovah* than the majesty of God, for he assumes this principle, which ought to have been sufficiently known to the whole people, that he was the only true God who had chosen for himself the seed of Abraham, who had published the Law by Moses, who had made a covenant with the posterity of Abraham. There is then no doubt but that the Prophet meant that when the Jews became illuminated, they would be convinced of what they had forgotten, that is, that they had departed from the only true God. This mode of speaking then means the same as though he had said, "I will open their eyes, that they may at length acknowledge that they are apostates, and be thus humbled when made sensible how grievous was their impiety in forsaking me the fountain of living waters."

He afterwards adds, that they should be *to him a people*, and that he in his turn would be *to them a God;* for they would *return* to him *with the whole heart.* By these words the Prophet shews more clearly what he had before referred to, that God's blessings would be then altogether salutary when they regarded their giver. As long then as we regard only the blessings of God, our insensibility produces this effect, that the more bountiful he is towards us, the more culpable we become. But when we regard God's bounty and paternal kindness towards us, we then really enjoy his blessings. This is the meaning of the Prophet's words when he says, "I shall be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people." What this mode of speaking means has been stated elsewhere.

Though God rules the whole world, he yet declares that he is the God of the Church; and the faithful whom he has adopted, he favours with this high distinction, that they are his people; and he does this that they may be persuaded that there is safety in him, according to what is said by Habakkuk, "Thou art our God, we shall not die." (Hab. i. 12.) And of this sentence Christ himself is the best in-

terpreter, when he says, that he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, (Luke xx. 38;) he proves by the testimony of Moses, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though dead, were yet alive. How so; because God would not have declared that he was their God, were they not living to him. Since then he regards them as his people, he at the same time shews that there is life for them laid up in him. In short, we see that there is here promised by God not a restoration for a short time, but he adds the hope of eternal life and salvation; for the Jews were not only to return to their own country, when the time came to leave Chaldea, and a liberty granted them to build their own city; but they were also to become the true Church of God.

And the reason is also added, *Because they will return to me*, he says, *with their whole heart*. He repeats what we have already observed, that they would be wise (*cordatos*) and intelligent, whereas they had been for a long time stupid and foolish, and the devil had so blinded them, that they were not capable of receiving sound doctrine. But these two things, the reconciliation of God with men and repentance, are necessarily connected together, yet repentance ought not to be deemed as the cause of pardon or of reconciliation, as many falsely think who imagine that men deserve pardon because they repent. It is indeed true that God is never propitious to us, except when we turn to him; but the connection, as it has been already stated, is not such that repentance is the cause of pardon, nay, this very passage clearly shews that repentance itself depends on the grace and mercy of God. Since this is true, it follows that men are anticipated by God's gratuitous kindness.

We hence further learn, that God is not otherwise propitious to us than according to his good pleasure, so that the cause of all is only in himself. Whence is it that a sinner returns to the right way and seeks God from whom he has departed? Is it because he is moved to do so of himself? Nay, but because God illuminates his mind and touches his heart, or rather renews it. How is it that God illuminates him who has become blind? Surely for this we can find no other cause than the gratuitous mercy of God. When God

then is propitious to men, so as to restore them to himself, does he not anticipate them by his grace? How then can repentance be called the cause of reconciliation, when it is its effect? It cannot be at the same time its effect and cause.

We ought therefore carefully to notice the context here, for though the Prophet says that the Jews, when they returned, would be God's people, because they would turn to him with their whole heart, he yet had before explained whence this turning or conversion would proceed, even because God would shew them mercy. They who pervert such passages according to their own fancies, are not so acquainted with Scripture as to know that there is a twofold reconciliation of men with God: He is first reconciled to men in a hidden manner, for when they despise him, he anticipates them by his grace, and illuminates their minds and renews their hearts. This first reconciliation is what they do not understand. But there is another reconciliation, known by experience, even when we feel that the wrath of God towards us is pacified, and are indeed made sensible of this by the effects. To this the reference is made in these words, "Turn ye to me, and I will turn to you," (Zech. i. 3;) that is, "I appear severe and rigid to you; but whence is this? even because ye cease not to provoke my wrath; return to me, and you shall find me ready to spare you." God therefore did not then first begin to pardon sinners, when he does them good, but as he had been previously pacified, hence he turns them to himself, and afterwards shews that he is really reconciled to them.

By the *whole heart*, is intimated sincerity or integrity, as by a double heart, or a heart and a heart, is signified dissimulation. It is certain that no one turns to God in such a manner that he puts off all the affections of the flesh, that he is renewed at once in God's image, so that he is freed from every stain. Such a conversion is never found in man. But when the Scripture speaks of the whole heart, it is in contrast with dissimulation; "with my whole heart have I sought thee," says David; "I have hid thy words and will keep them: I have prayed for thy favour; I will ask," &c.,

(Ps. cxix. 10-16;) "They will seek me," as Moses says, "with their whole heart." (Deut. iv. 29; x. 12.) David did not divest himself of everything sinful, for he confesses in many places that he was labouring under many sins; but the clear meaning is, that what God requires is integrity. In short, the whole heart is integrity, that is when we deal not hypocritically with God, but desire from the heart to give up ourselves to him.

As we have before refuted the error of those who think that repentance is the cause why God becomes reconciled to us, so now we must know that God will not be propitious to us except we seek him. For there is a mutual bond of connection, so that God anticipates us by his grace, and also calls us to himself; in short, he draws us, and we feel in ourselves the working of the Holy Spirit. We do not indeed turn, unless we are turned; we do not turn through our own will or efforts, but it is the Holy Spirit's work. Yet he who under pretext of grace indulges himself and cares not for God, and seeks not repentance, cannot flatter himself that he is one of God's people; for as we have said, repentance is necessary. It follows,—but I cannot to-day finish this part, for he speaks of the badness of the figs, and of the remnant which still remained.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are placed in this world, that while daily receiving so many blessings, we may so pass our time as to regard our end and hasten towards the goal,—O grant, that the benefits and blessings by which thou invitest us to thyself, may not be impediments to us, and keep us attached to this world, but on the contrary stimulate us to fear thy name as well as to appreciate thy mercy, so that we may thus know thee to be our God, and strive on our part to present ourselves to thee as thy people, and so consecrate ourselves and all our services to thee, that thy name may be glorified in us, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Third.

8. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt.

8. Et sicut ficus malæ, quæ non comeduntur præ malitia (*id est*, amaritudine,) sic certe (*est* כי, *sed abundat*, certe sic,) dicit Jehova, ita ponam Zedekiam, regem Jehudah, et principes ejus, et reliquias Jerusalem, quæ residuæ sunt in terra hac, et eos qui habitant in terra Ægypti.

God, after having promised to deal kindly with the captives, now declares that he would execute heavier punishment on King Zedekiah, and the whole people who yet remained in their own country. We have stated why God exhibited this vision to the Prophet, even that he might support their minds who saw nothing but grounds of despair, and that also, on the other hand, he might correct their pride who flattered themselves in their own lot, because God had deferred his vengeance as to them. Then the Prophet, having given comfort to the miserable exiles, now speaks against Zedekiah and his people, who boasted that God was propitious to them, and that they had not only been fortunate, but also wise in continuing in their own country.

He then says that *Zedekiah* and *his princes*, and all who remained in Judea, were like the *bad figs*, which could not be eaten on account of their bitterness. I have said that this is to be referred to punishment and not to guilt. They had sinned, I allow, most grievously; but we are to regard the design of the Prophet. The meaning then is, that though the condition of those who had been driven into captivity was for the present harder, yet God would deal more severely with those who remained, because he had for a time spared them, and they did not repent, but hardened themselves more and more in their wickedness.

Now we know that Zedekiah was set over the kingdom of Judah, when Jeconiah surrendered himself to Nebuchadnezzar: he was the uncle of Jeconiah, and reigned eleven years; and during that time he ought to have been at least wise at the expense of another. For Eliakim, who was also called

Jehoiakim, had been chastised, and that not only once; but Nebuchadnezzar, after having spoiled the temple, rendered him tributary to himself, on his return to Chaldea. At length, after having been often deceived by him, he became extremely displeased with him; and his son, who had reigned with his father, three months after his death, voluntarily surrendered himself into the power and will of the conqueror. Mathaniah afterwards reigned, of whom the Prophet speaks here. *So*, he says, *will I render*[1] *Zedekiah* (called previously Mathaniah) *the king of Judah, and his princes, and the remnants of Jerusalem, who remain in this land*, (for the greater part had been led into exile,) *and those who dwell in the land of Egypt*, for many had fled thither; and we know that they were confederates with the Egyptians, and that through a vain confidence in them they often rebelled.

And this was also the reason why the prophets so sharply reproved them: they relied on the help of Egypt, and took shelter under its protection. When, therefore, they found themselves exposed to the will of their enemies, they fled into Egypt. But Nebuchadnezzar afterwards, as we shall see, conquered Egypt also. Thus it happened that they were only for a short time beyond the reach of danger. But as fugitive slaves, when recovered, are afterwards treated more severely by their masters, so also the rage of King Nebuchadnezzar became more violent against them. It now follows—

9. And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, *to be* a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

9. Et ponam eos in commotionem (*vel*, strepitum, *vel*, perturbationem, *alii* concussionem *vertunt*) in malum omnibus regnis terræ, in probrum, et parabolam, et proverbium, et execrationem in omnibus locis quo ejecero ipsos (*vel*, expulero.)

Here the Prophet borrows his words from Moses, in order to secure authority to his prophecy; for the Jews were

[1] Rather "make." The verb נתן, to give, means often to make, to constitute; and such is its meaning evidently here. As the figs were bad, unfit for eating; so God would make Zedekiah, the princes, &c., like them. The previous words, "yea, thus saith Jehovah," would be better included in a parenthesis:

8. But like the bad figs, which cannot be eaten, they being so bad, (yea, thus saith Jehovah,) so will I make Zedekiah, &c.—*Ed.*

ashamed to reject Moses, as they believed that the Law came from God: it would at least have been deemed by them an abominable thing to deny credit to the Law. And yet they boldly rejected all the prophets, though they were but faithful interpreters of the Law, as the case is with the Papists of the present day, who, though they dare not deny but that the Scripture contains celestial truth, yet furiously reject what is alleged from it. Similar was the perverseness of the Jews. Hence the prophets, in order to gain more credit to their words, often borrowed their very words from Moses, as though they had recited from a written document what had been dictated to them. For in Deuteronomy and in other places Moses spoke a language of this kind,—that God would give up the people to a concussion or a commotion, for a reproach, for a proverb, for a taunt, to all the nations of the earth. (Deut. xxviii. 37; 1 Kings ix. 7.)

It is then the same as though Jeremiah had said, that the time would at length come when the Jews would find that so many maledictions had not been pronounced in vain by Moses. They no doubt read Moses; but as they were so stupid, no fear, no reverence for God was felt by them, even when he terrified them with such words as these. The Prophet then says, that the time was now near when they should know by experience that God had not in vain threatened them.

I will set them for a commotion. The verb זוע, *zuo*, means to move and to be noisy. Many render the noun here "noise," others "perturbation," and others, "the shaking of the head;" for we are wont to shake the head in scorn.[1]

[1] "Vexation," as rendered by the *Vulg.*, and in several places in our version, is the best word. The word which follows is of a similar import, "for evil," that is, annoyance. The verse is as follows,—

9. And I will make them a vexation, an evil,
To all the kingdoms of the earth,—
A reproach and a proverb,
A taunt and an execration,
In all the places where I shall drive them.

The word for "taunt" is rendered in other places "a byword:" it denotes what is sharp and cutting. They were to be objects and subjects of these things. Being a vexation and an evil, or an annoyance to others, they would become objects of reproach and execration, and subjects of proverbs and of taunts. See a note on chapter xv. 4; vol. ii. p. 255.—*Ed.*

However this may be, we are to read in connection with this the following words,—that they would be *for a reproach, and a terror, and a taunt, and an execration, to all nations.* It is then said, *on account of evil:* for the preposition ל, *lamed,* is to be taken here in different senses: before "commotion," it means "for;" but here it is causal, "on account of." The severe and dreadful vengeance of God would be such, that it would move and disturb all nations. He indeed mentions *all kingdoms,* but the meaning is the same. He then adds *reproach,* that is, that they would be subjected to the condemnation of all nations. They had refused to submit to God's judgment, and when he would have made them ashamed for their good, they had wickedly resisted. It was therefore necessary to subject them to the reproach of all people.

It is added, *for a proverb and for a tale,* or as some read, "for a parable and for a proverb." The word משל, *meshel,* means a common saying; but here it signifies a scoff, and a similar meaning must be given to שנינה, *shenine,* a tale or a fable. By both words he means, that when the heathens wished to describe a most grievous calamity, they would take this example, "Yes, it is all over with the Jews, no nation has become so wretched." The same view is to be taken of *execration;* for he intimates that they would become a type and a pattern of a curse, "Yes, may you perish like the Jews; may God execute vengeance on you, as he has done on the Jews." He then adds, that this would happen to them *in all places wherever* God would *drive* them; as though the Prophet had said, that God would not be satisfied with their exile, though that was to be grievous and bitter; but that when driven to distant lands they would become objects of reproach, so that all would point at them with the finger of scorn, accompanied with every mark of reproach, and would be also taking them as an example of execration. He afterwards adds—

10. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

10. Et mittam in ipsos gladium, famem et pestem, usque dum consumantur e superficie terræ, quam dedi ipsis et patribus ipsorum.

He confirms the former verse,—that God would then with extreme rigour punish them, by allowing the city and the inhabitants who remained, to be given up to the will of their enemies. And Jeremiah still speaks as from the mouth of Moses, that his prophecy might be more weighty, and that he might frighten those men who were so refractory. There are here three kinds of punishments which we often meet with, under which are included all other punishments. But as God for the most part punishes the sins of men by pestilence, or by famine, or by war, he connects these three together when his purpose is to include all kinds of punishment.

He adds, *Until they be consumed from the face of the land;* he says not "until they be consumed in the land," but from the face of it, מֵעַל, *mol*, from upon it: for the Jews were not consumed in their own country; but he consumed them by degrees elsewhere, so that they gradually pined away: they were driven into exile, and that was their final destruction.[1] What this clause means I have explained in another place.

The Prophet adds, *which I gave to them and to their fathers.* His object here was to shake off from the Jews that foolish confidence with which they were inebriated: for as they had heard of the land in which they dwelt, that it was the rest of God, and as they knew that it had been given to them by an hereditary right, according to what had been promised to their fathers, they thought that it could never be taken away from them. They therefore became torpid in their sins, as though God was bound to them. The Prophet ridicules this folly by saying, that the promise and favour of God would not prevent him from depriving them of the land and of its possession, and from rejecting them as though they were aliens, notwithstanding the fact, that he had formerly adopted them as his children.

[1] The "sword" means war, and by war they were led captive. But their consumption in captivity is not what is here related; but their removal from their own land, and the means employed for that purpose. He had spoken before of what they would become in exile; but here he goes back as it were to describe their misery at the time of their captivity; they would be removed from their own land either by captivity, signified by the sword, or by famine, or by pestilence.—*Ed.*

We now see the meaning of both parts of this vision. For the Prophet wished to alleviate the sorrow of the exiles when he said, that their state at length would be better; and so he promised that God would be reconciled to them after having for a time chastised them. Thus it is no small comfort to us when we regard the end; for as the Apostle says to the Hebrews, when we feel the scourges of God, sorrow is a hinderance to a patient suffering, as chastisement is for the present grievous, bitter, and difficult to be endured. (Heb. xii. 11.) It is therefore necessary, if we would patiently submit to God, to have regard to the issue: for until the sinner begins to taste of God's grace and mercy, he will fret and murmur, or he will be stupid and hardened; and certainly he will receive no comfort. Afterwards the Prophet shews, on the other hand, that though God may spare us for a time, there is yet no reason for us to indulge ourselves, for he will at length make up for the delay by the heaviness of his punishment: the more indulgently he deals with us, the more grievous and dreadful will be his vengeance, when he sees that we have abused his forbearance. Now follows—

CHAPTER XXV.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that *was* the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam, ad omnem populum Jehudah (*sed* לע *accipitur etiam hic diverso sensu: sermo enim directus fuit ad Jeremiam ut esset illius testis ac præco, deinde ad populum ut tandem perveniret ex ore Jeremiæ ad omnes Judæos quod uni dictum fuerat*) anno quarto Joakim filii Josiæ regis Jehudah: hic est annus primus Nebuchadnezer regis Babel.

This prophecy no doubt preceded the vision which we have just explained, and which had just been presented to Jeremiah when Jehoiakim died, and when Zedekiah reigned in the place of Jeconiah; who, being the last king, was substituted for his nephew Jeconiah. But related now is the prophecy which Jeremiah was bidden to proclaim in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; and he reigned, as we shall here-

after see, eleven years. We hence conclude that his book is composed of various addresses, but that the order of time has not always been preserved. Now the sum of the whole is, that when God found that the people could not be amended and restored to a right mind by any warnings, he denounced final ruin both on the Jews and on all the neighbouring nations: but why he included the heathens we shall hereafter see.

He then says, that this prophecy was committed to him *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim;* and he adds, that the same year was *the first of King Nebuchadnezar.* This seems inconsistent with other places, where the third of Jehoiakim is mentioned for the fourth year; and hence a long time is allotted for the first year of Nebuchadnezar. But a solution of this is not difficult, if we consider that Nebuchadnezar suddenly returned into Chaldea to settle his affairs at home, when the report of his father's death was brought to him; for he feared, lest in his absence a tumult should arise, as it often happened. He was therefore anxious to secure his own affairs; and having settled things at home, he brought Jehoiakim into subjection, and in the fourth year of his reign he compelled him to open his treasures, and also led away captive those whom he wished. And it was at this time that Daniel and his companions were led away into exile, and the precious vessels of the Temple were removed. As to the first year of Nebuchadnezar's reign, he reigned first with his father; and then when he reigned alone, the beginning of a new reign is justly mentioned as the first year. Though then he was made king, yet as he did not exercise the chief power until his father's death, it was not until that event that he was really king; this is the reason why mention is made of his first year. But we ought especially to notice what the Prophet says,—that *the word came* to him, not for his own sake, but that he might be the public herald of God. It now follows,—

2. The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying.

2. Quem sermonem protulit Jeremias Propheta ad totum populum Jehudah, et ad omnes habitatores Jerosolymæ, dicendo.

He shews more clearly in this verse what he had just

said,—that he was not taught from above, that he might suppress what he had heard, but that he might proclaim it as from the mouth of God; and hence he gives himself the honourable title of a Prophet, as though he had said, that he came furnished with the indubitable commands of God, and was at the same time honoured with the office of a Prophet; and he came thus, that no one might dare despise his doctrine. Now follows his sermon,—

3. From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, (that *is* the three and twentieth year,) the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

3. A tertio decimo anno Josiæ filii Ammon regis Jehudah ad hunc diem, hic tertius et vicesimus annus est, loquutus est Jehova ad me, et loquutus sum ad vos, surgens mane; et non audistis:

4. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them;* but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

4. Et misit Jehova ad vos omnes suos servos Prophetas, mane surgens et mittens; et non audistis et non inclinastis aurem vestram ad audiendum;

5. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever.

5. Dicendo, Revertimini agedum quisque a via sua mala et a malitiis operum vestrorum; et habitate super terram, quam dedit Jehova vobis et patribus vestris a sæculo et usque in seculum (*et quæ sequuntur.*)

Jeremiah now expostulates with the Jews, because they had not only perfidiously departed from the true worship of God, and despised the whole teaching of his Law, but because they had shaken off the yoke, and designedly and even obstinately rejected all warnings, being not moved by reproofs nor even by threatenings. He does not then simply charge them with impiety and ingratitude, but adds the sin of perverseness, that they were like untameable wild beasts, and could by no means be corrected.

He says, that *from the thirteenth year of Josiah king of Judah, to that year*, which was the *twenty-third year*, he had not ceased faithfully to perform the office committed to him, but had effected nothing. It hence appears how incorrigible was their wickedness. We have seen, at the beginning of the book, that he was called by God to be a Prophet in the thirteenth year of King Josiah; and he had now been engaged in his calling, as he declares, for twenty-three years.

He had spent his time in vain, he had consumed much labour without any fruit. It is then no wonder that he now accuses them of perverseness, and that in the name of God; for he pleads not his own cause, but shews what the Jews deserved, considering how much God had laboured in reclaiming them, and that they had rejected all his warnings and refused all his remedies. Then *from the thirteenth year of Josiah*, he says, *to this day;* and afterwards in a parenthesis he adds, that he had already discharged his office for twenty-three years.

We learn that the Prophet spoke thus seventeen years before the destruction of the City and Temple; for he had accomplished forty years before the people were driven into exile, and before they who thought themselves safe, miserably perished. He continued to the death of Josiah; and afterwards about twenty-two transpired; for Jehoiakim reigned eleven years; and without reckoning the short time of Jeconiah, Mathaniah, called also Zedekiah, was in the eleventh year removed, and disgracefully and reproachfully put to death. Thus it appears that the Prophet constantly laboured for forty years.

Hence, also, we learn how diabolical was the madness of that people in rejecting so many admonitions. And if we connect another thing, to which I lately referred, that they had been taught by many examples, it will appear still more evident that the disease of impiety as to that people was altogether incurable.

But this passage deserves special attention; for we here learn that we ought immediately to return to God when he invites us; for faith is known by its promptitude. As soon then as God speaks, it behoves us to be attentive, so that we may immediately follow him. But if God ceases not for a whole year to warn and exhort us, while at the same time his doctrine is despised, we become guilty of intolerable sin. Let us then remember that *days* are here in a manner mentioned as well as *years*, that the Jews might consider how many days are included in every year; and let us also know that years are mentioned by Jeremiah, that they might understand that they had no excuse, inasmuch as God had for

so long a time ceased not to promote their welfare, while in the meantime they persisted in their impiety, and continued obstinate to the last. This is the reason why the Prophet relates again when it was that he began to discharge his prophetic office, even from the thirteenth year of Josiah.

He then adds, that it was their own fault that they had not repented; *spoken*, he says, *has Jehovah to me, and I to you.* By saying that the word of God was deposited with him, he no doubt intended to assert his authority against the unbelievers, who clamoured that he presumptuously pretended God's name, and that he had not been sent by God. For we have elsewhere seen that the Church was then miserably torn, having intestine broils, and many were boasting that they were prophets; and we shall hereafter find the same thing in other places. Thus, then, Jeremiah was not received by the whole people, and his authority was disputed. Since then he had to contend with many ungodly men, he here testifies that he came not of himself, but that the prophetic office had been committed to him.

After having asserted the authority of his call, he adds, that he had faithfully promoted the welfare of the whole people; for he declares how faithful and diligent he had been when he says, that he had *spoken* and *rose up early;* for to rise up early means that he had been assiduous in his work. The Prophet then shews that he had not been tardy or idle, and that he had not spoken carelessly as many do, who seem to do what God commands, but display no fervid zeal and no sedulity. The Prophet then, after having declared that he had been sent from above, adds that he had exercised fidelity and diligence, that he had strenuously served God and his Church. *I have spoken to you,* he says, *as the Lord had spoken to me,*—how? *rising up early.*

He then adds, *I have spoken, and ye heard not.* He complains here that his work had been useless, and at the same time shews that the whole fault was in the people. He confirms the same thing in other words, *Jehovah has sent to you all his servants the prophets, rising up early, &c.* He enhances their sin,—that they had not only rejected one Prophet but even many; for God had not employed Jere-

miah alone to teach them, but had joined others with him, so that they were less excusable. We hence see that their sin is in this verse exaggerated; for the Jews had not only despised God in the person of one man, but had also rejected all his servants. He might, indeed, have simply said, that God had sent his servants, but he adds the word *prophets*, in order that their ingratitude might appear more evident. It was, indeed, very wicked to neglect God's servants; but as prophecy was an invaluable treasure, and a singular pledge and symbol of God's favour, it was a double crime when they thus despised the prophets, whose very name ought to have been held sacred by them.

He afterwards applies to God what he had said of himself, *rising up early*. It is certain that God does not rise up, as he sleeps not in the night; but the language is much more expressive and forcible, when God himself is said to rise up early. And it was not without reason that the Prophet spoke so emphatically; for though the Jews were sufficiently convicted of ingratitude for having disregarded God's servants, it was yet a monstrous impiety to shew no regard for God. But when the unbelieving are proved guilty, they ever fix their eyes on men, "Ho! it is with a mortal that I have to do; far be it from me ever to rise up against God; but why is this so much blamed, since I do not immediately perish? since I am not suddenly cast down at the nod of man? what! am I not free to inquire, and to discuss, and to examine every part of what is said? why do the prophets so imperiously treat us, that it is not lawful to doubt any of their words?" Thus, then, did the ungodly speak. But God on the other hand answered them and said, that he was despised, as also Christ said, "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me." (Luke x. 16.) So also the Prophet sets forth God himself as rising up early, exhorting the people and manifesting every care for their wellbeing. This, then, is the design of the metaphor, when he says, that God had sent to them and rose up early; he rose up early while sending his servants.

Now as God fulminates against all despisers of his doctrine, so from these words we may gather no small consola-

tion; for we certainly conclude that God watches over our safety whenever sound and faithful teachers go forth: it is the same as though he himself descended from heaven, rose up early, and was intent in securing our salvation. This we learn from the very words of the Prophet, when he says, that God rose up early. But as this testimony of God's favour and paternal care towards us is delightful, so to the same extent dreadful is the vengeance that awaits those who neglect this favour, who sleep when God is watching, who hear not when he is speaking, who continue in their sloth and torpor when God of his own accord meets them, and kindly and gently invites them to himself.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to choose us from our infancy to be thy people, and that when we were wretched apostates, thou hast also been pleased to restore us to the right way, by stretching forth thine hand to lead us,— O grant, that we may not be deaf nor idle; but may it please thee, by thy Spirit, especially to correct all obstinacy in our hearts, so that we may render ourselves obedient and submissive to thee: and as thou hast not ceased continually to call us, may we in our turn respond to thee, and not only by our tongues, but also by our works, pursue the course which thou hast appointed for us, until we shall reach the goal, and enjoy that blessed state of glory which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Fourth.

We began yesterday to explain God's complaint against the Jews,—that he had found them wholly refractory and rebellious. He says, in one word, that they did *not hear him;* but he afterwards adds, that they *did not incline their ear to hear him;* by which mode of speaking, is set forth more fully their perverseness, as they closed their ears as it were designedly; for not to incline the ear is more than not to hear. Jeremiah then means, that they had so hardened themselves against all that was taught by the prophets,

that they designedly rejected everything that was set before them by God's authority.

He afterwards explains what God required them to do, *Turn ye, I pray, every one from his evil way and from the wickedness of your doings, and dwell in the land which Jehovah has given to you and your fathers from age even to age.* What God required was doubtless most just; for he demanded nothing from the Jews but to repent. There was also a promise added; God not only exhorted them to repent, but wished also to be reconciled to them, and having blotted out all memory of their sins, to shew them kindness: had they not been harder than stones, they must have been turned to his service by so kind a treatment. God might have indeed sharply reproved them, he might have threatened them, he might, in short, have cut off every hope of pardon; but he only required them to repent, and at the same time added a promise of free forgiveness. As then they had despised so great a favour, it follows that they must have been men of reprobate minds and of irreclaimable habits.

When they were bidden to repent of their *evil way and of the wickedness of their doings*, it was done for sake of amplifying; for the Prophet wished to take away from them every pretence for evasion, lest they should ask what was the wickedness or what was the evil way. He then intimates that they were fully proved guilty; and for this purpose he made the repetition. By *way* is designated a continued course of life; but as they had fully shewed themselves perverse in many ways, he refers to their fruits, as though he had said, that they in vain contended with God, by inquiring what had been their evil way, for their whole life sufficiently testified that they were wholly given to wickedness.

Now there is a striking alliteration in the verbs שׁבוּ and and וְשָׁבוּ: the verb שׁבוּ, *shebu*, means sometimes to rebel, it means to return to the right way, and it means to rest or dwell in. He uses the same verb, though the sense is different when he says, "Return ye," and "ye shall dwell."[1]

[1] This is not quite correct: the verbs are not the same, though in some moods and tenses they are formed the same; the one is שׁב, and the other is יָשַׁב.—*Ed.*

He also emphatically uses the word אִישׁ, *aish*, "every one:" it means properly "man;" but it is taken in Hebrew for every one or each one, "each one from his evil way." The Prophet exempted none, lest they thought that their fault was extenuated, had not the evil been universal. He hence says, that *every one* was given to *wickedness;* as though he had said, that impiety not only prevailed among the whole people, as the case commonly is, but that every one had become corrupt, so that there was not one sound or upright among the whole people.

And this is what ought to be observed; for we are wont, in a cold manner, to confess our sins, and to pray to God when we are proved guilty, except when each one is touched with the sense of his own guilt, and owns himself to be justly exposed to God's judgment; for while every one mingles with the multitude, it so happens that no one acknowledges the heinousness of his own sins. Therefore, for true and sincere repentance this peculiar examination is necessary, so that every one may repent and not regard his friends.

When he says, *Dwell ye in the land*, though it be the imperative mood, yet it is a promise, by which God declared that he was ready to receive the Jews into favour, provided they returned from the heart to him: he proposed to them, as a symbol of his paternal favour, the possession of the land; for that land was as it were the pledge of their adoption; and the Jews, while they dwelt there, might have felt assured that God was their Father. He adds, *From age even to age;* as though he had said, "I am prepared to do you good not only for one day, or for a short time, but also to shew you kindness from age to age. It will then be your fault if ye be not happy, and if this happiness will not pass on from you to your children and grandchildren." But the more delightful the invitation was, the more detestable became the impiety of the people, as it will be stated hereafter. He now adds,—

6. And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with

7. Et ne ambuletis post deos alienos ad serviendum ipsis, et ad incurvandum coram ipsis (*id est*, ad

the works of your hands, and I will do you no hurt.	eos adorandos,) et ne provocetis me in opere manuum vestrarum, et non malefaciam vobis.

The Prophet mentions here one kind of sin; for though the Jews in many, and even in numberless ways kindled God's wrath, yet they especially procured a heavy judgment for themselves by their superstitions. They indeed manifested their contempt of God by adultery, theft, and plunder, but in a way not so direct; for when they abandoned themselves to the superstitions of the Gentiles, they thus shook off the yoke of God, as though they openly testified that he was no longer their God. And we know that nothing is so much valued and approved by God as a sincere attention to real piety; hence the Church is taught in the first table of the Law how he is to be worshipped. This is the reason why the Prophet especially reminds the Jews here that they had, in this respect, been rebellious against God, because he could not bring them back from their corrupt superstitions. He does not at the same time absolve them of other sins; but he mentions this one kind, in order that they might understand, that they were not only in part, but altogether rebellious against God; for they wholly departed from him when they vitiated his worship with wicked superstitions. We must then bear in mind, that the Jews were not condemned for some small offences, but accused of the most heinous of sins; for they had become covenant-breakers and apostates, and had forsaken God himself and his law.

He says, *Walk ye not after foreign gods to serve them and to worship them.* He pointed out as by the finger, how gross had been their impiety; for they had given themselves up to idols, that they might basely serve them; they had wholly devoted themselves to them. It was not then an excusable error, but a manifest treachery. He adds, *Provoke me not by the work of your hands.* No doubt the Prophet meant by these words to confirm what has been already stated,—that idolatry is before God an intolerable wickedness: and at the same time he shews, that they had not sinned through ignorance, for they had in time been reminded of the atrocity of this sin. As then they had not ceased from

their superstitions, they were thus proved guilty of a diabolical madness, for they feared not to provoke God against them. And he says, *by the work of your hands;* and thus he speaks contemptuously or rather reproachfully of idols. They called them gods, not that they were ignorant that they were statues curiously made of wood and stone, or of some other material; but still they thought that divinity was connected with them, for they believed that God was thus rightly worshipped. Now, then, the Prophet calls them *the work of hands,* as though he had said, "If the Jews themselves are nothing, the idols are less than nothing; for they are only the work of hands." And this way of speaking often occurs in the Prophets, by which God intended to shake off the stupidity of men, who were become quite senseless in their own devices; as though he had said, "Have you not a particle of a right understanding in you? do you not know, that this which ye worship is the work of your own hands? and what can your hands do? for what are ye yourselves?" We now perceive what the Prophet had in view in using these words.

There is, again, a promise given, *I will not do you evil.* God declares by these words that they would be exempt from all trouble and distress, if they continued to walk according to the rule of true religion; and thus he intimates that whatever evils they had already endured, and would have hereafter to endure, could not be imputed to anything but to their own perverseness, for God had of his own free-will promised to spare them, provided they departed from their wicked ways. And such a hope ought especially to encourage us to repent, for we see that God is ready to receive us and seeks reconciliation with us, and is always prepared to forgive all our sins, provided we from the heart return to him; and he seems as one unwilling to inflict punishment. Here again the impiety of the people is more fully proved, for they refused to receive from God this invaluable favour. It follows,—

7. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

7. Et non audistis me, (non auscultastis mihi) dicit Jehova, ut provocaretis (*hoc est,* quia voluistis me irritare) in opere manuum vestrarum, in malum vobis.

He proves what he had said before, that the Jews had been wholly disobedient, though God had kindly offered and shewed that he would be reconciled to them, provided they turned from the heart to him. The fact that this message was not received by the Jews, was an evidence of extreme and irreclaimable obstinacy. And he enhances their guilt by saying, *that ye might provoke me;* for he intimates that they were led away to evil by a voluntary purpose, as though they wished to provoke God. The Prophet, then, by saying *that ye might provoke me,* accuses them of deliberate wickedness. It, indeed, often happens that men go astray through ignorance, and do not attend because no one warns them; but since God had so many times exhorted the Jews to repent, no other opinion could have been formed of them, but that they designedly wished, not only to despise God, but also to provoke him to the contest.

And this is what we ought carefully to notice, for whosoever has been taught the will of God, unless he obeys, he cannot escape the charge of a voluntary obstinacy, as he has resolved, as it were, to carry on war with God. Though the ungodly do not confess this, yet the fact is evident; and God, who is a righteous judge, has declared that they who despised the prophetic doctrine were so regarded.

And he says, *for evil to you,* in order that they might know that God did not plead his own cause because he stood in need of their service, but that he cared for their welfare. For there is to be understood here an implied contrast, as though the Prophet had said, "What loss has God suffered by your perverseness? Ye have, indeed, tried to deprive him of his glory, for ye have adorned your idols by spoils taken from him; but it is not in men's power to subtract anything from the rights of God; he remains ever perfect: then it only turns out to your ruin when ye are rebellious. When, therefore, God now reproves you, he does not maintain his own right, as though he received any gain or loss from you; but it is an evidence of his mercy, because he would not have you to perish, though he sees that you are led into destruction by an insane impulse." It afterwards follows,—

8. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Because ye have not heard my words,

9. Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

8. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Eo quod non audistis ad sermones meos (*hoc est*, non attenti fuistis ad sermones meos:)

9. Ecce ego mittam et accipiam (*vel*, assumam) omnes cognationes (*vel*, familias) Aquilonis, dicit Jehova, et Nebuchadnezer regem Babylonis servum meum, et inducam eos in terram hanc et in habitatores ejus, et in omnes gentes istas in circuitu, et perdam eas, et ponam eas in stuporem et sibilum, et in vastitates seculi (*id est*, perpetuas.)

Here follows a denunciation of punishment; the Prophet says that God would no longer deal in words, for their iniquity had ripened, according to what is in Genesis, "My Spirit shall not contend (or strive) any more with man." (Genesis vi. 3.) When God prepares to execute vengeance on the wickedness of men, he says that there is no more time for contending. A sudden execution of judgment is then what is here intended; but he mentions at the same time the punishment. After having explained the cause of so much severity, even because they would *not hear the words of God*, he adds, *Behold, I will send for and take all the families of the north*, &c. I have no doubt but that the Prophet alludes to the edicts of kings, for when they wish to raise an army they publish their edicts, and order those everywhere to meet who have either given their names or been enlisted as soldiers. So God now by these words intimates that the Chaldeans were under his power, so that they were ready, as soon as he gave them a signal; according to other modes of speaking he uses in other places, but in the same sense, "I will hiss," and also, "I will send an alarm." The Scripture is full of expressions of this kind, which shew that all mortals are prepared to obey God whenever he intends to employ their services; not that it is their purpose to serve God, but that he by a secret influence so rules them and their tongues, their minds and hearts, their hands and their feet, that they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to do his will and pleasure. And in the same sense he calls Nebuchadnezzar his *servant*, for that cruel tyrant never meant to offer his service to God; but God employed him as his in-

strument, as though he had been hired by him. And we shall see also elsewhere that he is called God's servant.

And it ought to be noticed, for we hence learn the fact, that many are God's servants who are yet wholly unworthy of so honourable a title; but they are not so called with respect to themselves. Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was making war with the God of Israel when he invaded Judea; and only ambition, and avarice, and cruelty impelled him to undertake so many wars. When, therefore, we think of him, of his designs and his projects, we cannot say that he was God's servant; but this is to be referred to God only, who governs by his hidden and incomprehensible power both the devil and the ungodly, so that they execute, though unwittingly, whatever he determines. There is a great difference between these and God's servants, who, when anything is commanded them, seek to render that obedience which they ought—all such are faithful servants. They are, then, justly called God's servants, for there is a mutual concord between God and them: God commands, and they obey. But it is a mutilated and a half service when the ungodly are led beyond the purpose of their own minds, and God uses them as instruments when they think of and design another thing.

It must at the same time be noticed that this name of a servant is given, though in an inferior sense, to Nebuchadnezzar, for the sake of honour, in order that the Jews might be made ashamed; for it was a great reproach to them that a heathen had been chosen by God, and had obtained the title of a servant, when they themselves had become aliens. The Prophet then, no doubt, intended to cast reproach on them by raising to this dignity the king of Babylon. There was also another reason, even that the Jews might know that whatever they were to suffer would be inflicted by God's hand, and that they might not otherwise think of Nebuchadnezzar than as God's scourge, in order that they might thus be led to confess their sins and be really humbled. We now perceive the meaning of the words.

He says afterwards, *I will bring them on this land and on all its inhabitants*, &c. By these words he confirms what I have just referred to, that God had his vengeance ready as

soon as he purposed to treat the Jews as they deserved. As he had then said that Nebuchadnezzar and all the people of the north were prepared by him as hired soldiers, so he now adds that victory was in his power—*I will bring them*, he says, *over the land* and over all the *neighbouring nations which are around*.[1] Why the Prophet denounces punishment here on other nations we shall see elsewhere. The Jews, in addition to other vain confidences, were wont to flatter themselves with this, that if Nebuchadnezzar should invade the territories of others, all would unite together against him, and that by such a confederacy they could easily overcome him. As, then, the Jews looked to all parts, and knew that the Egyptians were in alliance with them, and were also persuaded that the Moabites, the Tyrians, the Syrians, and all the rest would become confederates, they became confident, and indulged in that security by which they deceived themselves. This, therefore, is the reason why the Prophet expressly threatens the nations by which they were surrounded, not for the sake of these nations, but that the Jews might cease to entertain their vain confidence.

God says that he would make all nations, as well as the Jews, *an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations*. He intimates that it would be a dreadful calamity, such as would astonish all that heard of it. As it is said elsewhere, "The report alone will excite alarm;" so in this place, *I will make them for an astonishment*. When a moderate calamity is related to us, we are indeed moved to pity; but when the greatness of the evil exceeds belief, we then stand amazed, and all our senses are stunned. The Prophet then means that the calamity which God would bring on the Jews would be, as it were, monstrous, such as would stupify all that would hear of it.[2]

[1] "Over or on the land," &c., rather than "against;" for it is literally, "I will cause them to come over this land," &c. So is the *Vulg.*—*Ed.*

[2] The three words are by the *Sept.* and *Arab.* rendered "extinction—hissing—perpetual reproach;" by the *Vulg.*, "astonishment—hissing—perpetual solitudes;" by the *Targ.*, "waste—astonishment—perpetual desolations;" and by the *Syr.*, "astonishment—hissing—waste for ever." The first word, שמה, means first, waste or desolation, and then what waste occasions, wonder or astonishment. It evidently means the latter here, as desolation is expressed by the last word; it is so rendered by the *Vulg.*,

At last he adds, that they would be *for perpetual desolations*. He does afterwards, indeed, mitigate the severity of these words; for he confines God's vengeance to seventy years. But this mode of speaking is common in Scripture; for [illegible] *[illegible]* stands opposed to a short time. It is to be taken in different senses, according to the circumstances of the passage. It sometimes designates perpetuity, as when the Prophet says, from *age to age*, that is, through continued ages, or through a course of years, which shall last perpetually. But age, or [illegible] *[illegible]*, is often to be taken for the time allotted to the people until the coming of Christ; and sometimes it means simply a long time, as here and in many other places. It follows,—

10. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.	10. Et transire faciam (*hoc est*, auferam) ab ipsis vocem gaudii, et vocem laetitiae, vocem sponsi et vocem sponsae, vocem molarum (*id est*, strepitum molarum) et lumen lucernae.

He confirms here what I have just said,—that the Jews were not to be chastised in a common manner, but be exposed to extreme distress. For though all things may not be with us prosperous and according to our wishes, yet marriages may still be celebrated, and some hilarity may remain; we may yet eat and drink and enjoy the necessaries of life, though we may have no pleasures; but the Prophet shews here that such would be the devastation of the land, that there would be no thoughts about marriages, that all hilarity and joy would cease, that there would be no preparations of food, no grinding of corn, and that, in short, all feasts usually kept by the light of candles would be no more celebrated. Here, then, he describes to the life that devastation which had been before mentioned.[1]

the *Syr.*, and in our version and by *Blayney* and others. The two words are again found together in the eleventh verse. Here the order, as often is the case, is inverted; the effect is first mentioned, then the cause: the cause of astonishment and hissing would be the desolations.—*Ed.*

[1] As this verse is connected with the foregoing, the ו would be better rendered *for*,—

10. For I will make to cease from among them
The voice of exultation and the voice of joy,

The Prophet no doubt indirectly condemns that insensibility by which the devil had possessed the minds of the people; for though the prophets continually threatened them, yet there was no end to their exultations and no moderation in them, according to what is said by Isaiah, who complains of such wantonness, that they said, "Let us feast, to-morrow we shall die;" and who also says, "I have called you to sackcloth and ashes, but ye went to the harp and to feastings." (Isaiah xxii. 12, 13.) When, therefore, the Prophet speaks here of the *voice of joy and gladness*, of the noise of *millstones*, and of lamps, he doubtless upbraids them with their stupid security; for they feared nothing, and thought themselves safe even when God was shewing himself, as with an outstretched hand, to be their avenging judge. It follows,—

11. And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

11. *Et erit tota terra hæc in vastitatem et in stuporem, et servient gentes hæ regi Babylonis septuaginta annis.*

Here the Prophet mentions the restriction of which I have spoken, and thus he mitigates the severity of their punishment. It is, then, a kind of correction; not that he changes anything, but only by this sort of correction he explains what he before meant by perpetual desolations.

He says, *The whole land shall be a waste and an astonishment*, or as some render it, "a desolation." The word שִׁמָּמָה, indeed, means to lay desolate, and also to astonish; but as he had lately used the word in the sense of astonishment, I see no reason for changing its meaning here, especially as it is connected with חָרְבָּה, *charebe*. But as to the drift of the passage, there is not much difference whether we say, the land shall be a desolation, or an astonishment; for it was to be a solitude—reduced to a desolation or a wilderness.[1]

The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride,
The voice of the millstone, and the light of the lamp.

The time for grinding was the morning; the earliest thing in the morning was this work, and was done every day. The time for the light of the lamp was the evening; when this disappears, it is an evidence that there are no inhabitants.—*Ed.*

[1] As the first word means waste or desolation, and means nothing else,

And serve shall these nations the king of Babylon seventy years. Here the Prophet concludes his prophecy concerning the future calamity of the people, even that the land would be reduced to a solitude, so as to render every one passing through it astonished, or that it was to become a horrid spectacle on account of its desolation. And that a time of seventy years was fixed, it was a testimony of God's paternal kindness towards his people, not indiscriminately towards the whole multitude, but towards the remnant of whom he had spoken elsewhere. Then the Prophet means, that however grievously the Jews had sinned, yet God would execute only a temporary punishment; for after seventy years, as we shall see, he would restore them to their own country, and repair what they had lost, even the inhabitation of the promised land, the holy city, and the Temple. And this is more fully expressed in the next verse.

12. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

12. Et erit cum impleti fuerint septuaginta anni, visitabo super regem Babylonis et super populum ejus, dicit Jehova, iniquitatem ipsorum, et super terram Chaldæorum, et ponam eam in desolationes sæculi (*id est*, perpetuas.)

The Prophet now, as I have said, shews more clearly why the time of the captivity and exile had been defined, even that the faithful might know that God would not forget his covenant, though he deprived the people of the inheritance of the land. These words were not addressed indiscriminately to the whole body of the people, as we have observed before in other places; but the Prophet intended to consult the benefit of God's elect, who always retained a concern for true religion; for they must have a hundred times despaired had not this promise been added. This, then, was a special doctrine intended as food for God's children; for he addressed, as it was apart, the elect and faithful only.

God says also, that at the end of seventy years he would *visit the iniquity of the king of Babylon*, and of his whole

and as the second word means astonishment as well as desolation, the rendering of our version, and of *Calvin*, must be right. As it is commonly the case, their order is here inverted, being different from the order in which they are found in verse ninth.—*Ed.*

people. We hence learn that Nebuchadnezzar was not called God's servant because he deserved anything for his service, but because God led him while he was himself unconscious, or not thinking of any such thing, to do a service which neither he nor his subjects understood to be for God. Though, then, the Lord employs the ungodly in executing his judgments, yet their guilt is not on this account lessened; they are still exposed to God's judgment. And these two things well agree together,—that the devil and all the ungodly serve God, though not of their own accord, but whenever he draws them by his hidden power, and that they are still justly punished, even when they have served God; for though they perform his work, yet not because they are commanded to do so. They are therefore justly liable to punishment, according to what the Prophet teaches us here.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we see everywhere evidences of thy wrath, and as our own conscience convinces every one of us, so that we are constrained to confess that we are all, from the highest to the lowest, guilty before thee,—O grant that we may in due time return to the right way, and seek to be reconciled to thee, and never doubt but that thou wilt be merciful and gracious to us, whenever we solicit pardon in the name of thy only-begotten Son; and may we also be so reconciled to thee, that we may know that thou art indeed with us as our Father, by ruling us by thy Spirit, so that thy name may to the end be glorified, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Fifth.

We explained in the last Lecture the verse in which God declared that he would punish the king of Babylon and his people for their cruelty towards the Israelites. We said that this was addressed peculiarly to the elect, for many of the people perished without the hope of salvation. But God intended in the meantime to shew his care for the remnant; and for this reason he defined the time of exile, and pre-

dicted that he would be an enemy to the Babylonians, for he would undertake the cause of his people.

One thing I did not explain, that is, what the Prophet says of eternal reproaches. Now, it seems that this was not fulfilled; for though after seventy years Babylon was taken and was reduced to a state of subjection, yet the city itself remained safe, and for many ages was celebrated for its great splendour. The Prophet, then, seems to have exceeded the limits of truth in speaking of these desolations; for such did not take place when the city was taken by the Medes and Persians. But, as we have said elsewhere, we ought not to restrict to one time what is said in many places by the prophets respecting the destruction of Babylon; for it pleased God, in various ways and at different times, to execute his vengeance on that people; and it appears evident from history that it would have been better for the Babylonians to have perished at once than to have undergone so many calamities. For in a short time after the people revolted from the Persians, the city was recovered by the contrivance and craft of Zopyrus; the nobles were then reduced into slavery, so that no dignity remained. It was afterwards taken by Alexander; and after that Seleucus obtained possession of it. On its ruins were then built the city Ctesiphon, and at length it gradually decayed. But no change occurred without a great diminution of the city's opulence; and nothing more disgraceful could have happened to it than for those who were in authority to be taken and hung on gibbets, as Zenophon and other historians relate.

We now, then, see how this passage, and others like it, are to be understood; for God does not speak only of one time of vengeance, but he includes all those judgments by which he vindicated the wrongs done to his people. It now follows,—

13. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all *that is* written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

13. Et adducam super terram illam omnes sermones meos quos loquutus sum super eam, quicquid scriptum est in libro hoc, quod prophetavit Jeremias super omnes gentes (*vel* in quo prophetavit, *si placeat referre ad librum.*)

He confirms what he had said before when he says, that

he would *bring* all his *words* on the Chaldeans; that is, that he would give effect to all the prophecies, so that it would be evident that Jeremiah had foretold nothing rashly, and that God had not in vain threatened them by the mouth of his servant. Such is the meaning, and hence we see what the Prophet intimates when he says, that God would bring all his words, for he had then spoken. But as the ungodly regard whatever is brought forward in God's name as a matter of sport and mockery, and boldly deride all threatenings, to *bring words* means the same thing with proving by events that God does not terrify men without accomplishing his words; in short, to bring words is to prove their authority. And, as I have said, the expression has a reference to the insensibility of men who give no credit to God's words until they are convinced by their accomplishment; for they think that the air only is beaten, and thus they are not touched by any fear. But God proves the power of his word when he executes what he has predicted.

We then see that the Prophet intends nothing else in this verse than to confirm what he had said before. And he speaks of Chaldea and says, *upon that land.*

And we must at the same time notice another form of speaking; for God says, that he had pronounced these *words;* he afterwards says, that Jeremiah was his minister, and as it were his herald; and he calls him also a scribe or a writer. God then here declares that he was the author of all that Jeremiah had brought forward; and yet he leaves his own office to his minister, for it is necessary to secure authority to the prophets; otherwise, except God visibly descended from heaven, men would either indiscriminately admit what might be said, and without judgment receive falsehood and truth, or they would become wholly hardened, so as to give no credit to prophetic instruction. He says, *whatsoever is written in this book.* The Prophet no doubt wrote down a summary of what he had delivered; for as we have said elsewhere, it was usual with the prophets, after they had spoken at large to the people and preached diffusely, to affix a short summary to the doors of the Temple. This volume then is what Jeremiah calls the book, which was composed from his

public addresses. It might in common language be called a summary. Then he adds, *in what*, or, "what he prophesied," in order to shew that he meant what he had before said; and so it might be rendered, that is, what he prophesied;[1] but the other exposition is not unsuitable, *in which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.* It follows,—

14. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

14. Quia fecerunt in illis (*vel*, quia coegerunt eos) in servitutem etiam ipsi, gentes multæ (*vel*, robustæ, *vel*, validæ) et reges magni; et rependam illis secundum actionem suam et secundum opus manuum ipsorum.

The beginning of the verse is obscure. When the verb עבד, *obed*, is followed by ב, *beth*, they think that it is to be taken actively, and rendered, to force or drive to bondage. It means properly, to serve; but they think that found as here it is a transitive verb. Some render it, "they employed them;" but this is frigid and ambiguous; for friends may be said to employ one another, when the work is mutual; hence the meaning is not sufficiently expressed. But the meaning may be given by a paraphrase, that they "forced them into bondage." Still the meaning of the Prophet is not yet sufficiently clear; for עבדו, *obedu*, may be taken either in the past or future tense. It is, indeed, in the past tense; but the past may be taken for the future: thus the meaning may be different. If it be taken in the past tense, then it cannot be applied except to the Babylonians; for they were those who had treated the Israelites as slaves, or had forced them into bondage; and בם, *bem*, "them," might be understood of the Israelites; for we know that pronouns are often thus used, when the Church, or God's elect people, is the subject. Then the Prophet's words may be thus rendered, "for they have tyrannically ruled over them," even the Israelites, "and they themselves," that is, the Israelites, shall in their turn rule, the latter words being understood. But the meaning, as it seems to me, would be more simple, were we to read the whole together in this way, "For they

[1] Had the book been intended, the אשר, *which*, would have been followed by a pronoun after the verb with the preposition ב, *in*, prefixed to it: for this is the idiom of the language. All the versions render the phrase, "whatever Jeremiah prophesied," &c.—*Ed.*

also themselves shall rule over them, even over strong and valiant nations and great kings, and I will recompense them," &c.

The reason which has constrained me to give this interpretation is this: It is said in the last verse that Jeremiah prophesied against all nations; then follows an explanation, and the Prophet briefly shews, or reminds us, what would be the issue of these prophecies, even that they also would themselves rule over these nations. Then בם, *bem*, as I think, refers to the Babylonians and other heathen nations; and it is a common thing with the prophets, when they speak of the restoration of the ancient Church, and of Christ's coming, to promise power to God's children to hold the whole world under their feet. The sentence also will flow better, when we give this version, "They shall rule." There is, indeed, a change as to time, but this is a common thing in Hebrew. It is then, *For they shall rule over them*, that is, the nations. Jeremiah had spoken of all heathen nations; mention had been made of all that he had prophesied against all nations; and he says now what seemed incredible, and hence the particle גם, *gam*, is introduced, "even these very Israelites," as though he had said, "Though this shall happen beyond hope, so as to appear strange and fabulous, yet God by the issue will shew that he has not in vain communicated this to me; for they, even the Israelites, shall have their turn to exercise dominion; and they shall constrain all nations to obey them." And what follows confirms my view; for he adds, *over strong nations*, גוים רבים, *guim rebim*, (for the ב, *beth*, may be repeated here;) or we may render the words "many nations;" for the word רבים, *rebim*, means both; but as it follows "and great kings," I am disposed to render the words, "strong nations." Then he says, "For they shall rule over strong nations and great kings."[1]

[1] A reference to chap. xxvii. 7, will enable us to understand this passage. The words are alike. "Many nations and great kings" in that verse mean the conquerors of the king of Babylon; and so they mean the same here, no doubt. "All the nations" in the preceding verse were "all the families of the north," mentioned in verse 9, who were subject to the king of Babylon; and "them" at the beginning of this verse are these nations, which are here spoken of as being subjected to bondage or to ser-

He then subjoins, *I will recompense them*, that is, both kings and nations, *according to their doing, and according to the work of their hands*, because they had exercised every kind of cruelty towards the miserable Israelites. Hence the Prophet pursues the same subject,—that God would at length really shew, that though he had been angry with his Church, yet all hope of mercy was not lost, for he was mindful of his covenant. He thus mitigates the severity of what he had previously said; he promises them something far better than what the wretched Jews could have expected in their extreme calamities.

We may again learn from the words of the Prophet, that God so employed Nebuchadnezzar and others, that they performed no service deserving of praise; for had they been without fault, God must doubtless have unjustly punished them. This passage then teaches us, that though the devil and the reprobate execute God's judgments, they yet deserve no praise for their obedience, for they have no such purpose in view. It now follows,—

15. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me, Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.

15. Quia sic dixit Jehova Deus Israel ad me, Sume calicem vini furoris (*vel*, iracundiæ) hujus e manu mea, et propina illum cunctis gentibus, ad quas ego mittam te ad eas (*sed hoc secundum redundat.*)

Jeremiah now explains more at large what might on account of its brevity have appeared obscure. He had spoken of all nations, but his discourse was abrupt; for he had not yet openly told us that he had been sent by God as a herald to summon all kings and nations before his tribunal, and to declare what was to be. As, then, the Prophet had referred to nothing of this kind, his discourse was ambiguous. But he now declares that a cup from God's hand had been de-

vitude, while in chap. xxvii. 7, the king of Babylon himself is mentioned. The verb עָבַד, when followed by ב, means invariably to enslave, to reduce to bondage, to bring into subjection, or to subdue. Then the verse should be thus rendered,—

For make them, even these, to serve,
Shall many nations and great kings;
And I will render to them according to their work,
According to the doing of their own hands.

This is the meaning given by the *Targ.*; the *Vulg.* and the *Syr.* render the verb incorrectly, though in both the pronoun *them* is made to refer to the nations in the preceding verse.—*Ed.*

livered to him, which he was to give to all nations to drink. We hence see that there is here nothing new, but that the Prophet is, as it were, the interpreter of his previous prophecy, which was briefly stated.

Moreover, that what he said might have more weight, he relates a vision, *Thus said Jehovah the God of Israel unto me, Take the cup of the wine of this fury from my hand.*[1] We have said in other places that the fulfilment of prophetic truth was not without reason dwelt upon, and that the servants of God were so armed, as though the execution of all that they alleged was ready at hand. They were said to demolish cities and to overthrow kingdoms even for this reason, because such was the torpidity of men, that they gave no credit to God, except they were brought to see the event as it were before their eyes. But as this subject has been handled more fully elsewhere, I shall only touch upon it here. He then says, that *a cup had been delivered* to him by God's hand; by which words he intimates, that he did not come forth of his own will to terrify the Jews and other nations, but that he faithfully proclaimed what had been committed to him; and he also intimates, that God spoke nothing now but what he meant shortly to execute; and this is what is to be understood by the word *cup*.

He calls it *the cup of the wine of fury*, or of wrath. This metaphor often occurs in the prophets, but in a different sense. For God is said sometimes to inebriate men when he stupifies them, and drives them at one time to madness, and at another time deprives them of common sense and understanding, so that they become like beasts; but he is said also to inebriate them, when, by outward calamities, he fills them with astonishment. So now the Prophet calls calamity the cup of wrath, even that calamity, which like fire was to inflame the minds of all those who received no benefit from

[1] I conceive that the sentence may be thus rendered,—

Take the cup of the wine of fury, even this, from my hand.

So do *Gataker* and *Venema* render the sentence, referring "this" to the cup and not to "fury." The word for "fury" is heat; it means hot, boiling, or burning wrath,—rendered "fury" by the *Vulg.* and *Syr.*,—"malediction" by the *Targ.*, and "unmixed" (the cup of this unmixed wine) by the *Sept.*—*Ed.*

chastisements. Madness, indeed, means no other thing than the despair of those who perceive God's hand stretched out against them, and thus rage and clamour, and curse heaven and earth, themselves and God. This is what we are to understand by *wrath*. He compares this wrath to *wine*, because they who are thus smitten by God's hand are carried away as it were beyond themselves, and repent not, nor think of their sins with calmness of mind, but abandon themselves to a furious rage. We now then understand why the Prophet says, that the *cup of the wine of wrath* had been given to him.

Then he adds, *And make all the nations to whom I send thee*[1] *to drink it.* Here, again, he confirms what I lately referred to, that his office was farther extended than to teach in the middle of the Church, but that he had also been chosen to proclaim as a herald God's judgments on all nations. He was, indeed, sent to the Jews otherwise than to heathen nations, for he was set over them as a teacher, and that for their salvation, provided they were not irreclaimable; but he was sent to the heathens expressly to threaten them with what was nigh at hand. He was, however, sent both to the Jews and to all other nations, as he will hereafter more distinctly shew in due order.

We now see the design and object of what is here said;—to add authority to his last prophecy, Jeremiah, in the first place, sets forth the vision which had been presented to him; and then he testifies that he brought nothing of his own, but only obeyed God and faithfully performed his commands; and thirdly, he intimates that he was not only appointed a teacher in the Church of God, but was also a witness of his vengeance on all nations. It follows,—

16. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

16. Et bibant et moveantur et insaniant (*ad verbum legendum esset*, bibent et inebriabuntur; *est enim ubique*, ו *conversivum; sed potius resolvi debet copula in particulam finalem*, ut bibent et inebrientur et insaniant) a facie gladii, quem ego mitto in medio ipsorum (inter ipsos.)

[1] Literally, "whom I send thee to them;" which the *Sept.* have rendered almost word for word, πρὸς ἃ (ἐθνη)—πρὸς αὐτούς; but the first πρὸς is not in the original. This was an attempt to transplant the peculiarity of one language to another, which is often the case with the *Septuagint*. The *Welsh* is literally the same with the *Hebrew*.—*Ed.*

Here the Prophet more fully shews what we have before stated, that they were not vain terrors when he denounced God's judgments on all nations, for we call those threatenings childish which are not accomplished. But the Prophet here declares that however obstinately the Jews and others might resist, they could not possibly escape God's vengeance, as he was the judge of all. Hence the Prophet is bidden to take a cup and to give it to others. But the Jews might have still objected and said, "We may, indeed, take the cup from thine hand, but what if we refuse? what if we cast away from us what thou givest us to drink?" Hence the Prophet says that, willing or unwilling, they were to take the cup, that they might drink and exhaust whatever was destined for them by God's judgment; he therefore says *that they may drink.*

He then adds, *that they may be incensed and become distracted.*[1] These two words refer, no doubt, to the grievousness of their punishment; for he intimates that they would become, as it were, destitute of mind and reason. When God kindly chastises us, and with paternal moderation, we are then able with resignation to submit to him and to flee to his mercy; but when we make a clamour and are driven almost to madness, we then shew that an extreme rigour is felt, and that there is no hope of pardon. The Prophet, then, intended to express, that so atrocious would be the calamities of the nations with whom God was angry, that they would become stupified and almost insane; and at the same time frantic, for despair would lay hold on their minds and hearts, that they would not be able to entertain any hope of deliverance, or to submit to God, but that they would, as it is usual with the reprobate, rise up against God and vomit forth their blasphemies.

He says, *because of the sword that I will send among them.*

[1] The Versions vary as to these two verbs: the best rendering is,—

And they shall drink and reel;
And they shall be distracted on account of the sword,
Which I shall send among them.

Blayney's version is nearly the same, "drink and stagger and be out of their wits;" but it is better to connect "the sword" with the latter verb only.—*Ed.*

It appears from the word בינתם, *bintem*, "among them," that there would be mutual conflicts, that they would destroy one another. God, then, would send his sword; but he would extend it now to the Chaldeans, then to the Egyptians; now to the Assyrians, then to other nations, so that with the same sword they would contend one with another, until at last it would prove a ruin to them all. It now follows,—

17. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me:

17. Et sumpsi calicem e manu Jehovæ, et propinavi cunctis gentibus ad quas misit me Jehova ad eas (*sed iterum supervacuum est hæc repetitio:*)

The Prophet now adds that he obeyed God's command; for he had before often testified that he was constrained to perform his office, which he would have willingly not have done, if he was at liberty. But as he was bound to obey the divine call, it was evident that it was not his fault, and that he was unjustly charged by the people as the author of the evils denounced. We indeed know that the prophets incurred much ill-will and reproach from the refractory and the despisers of God, as though all their calamities were to be imputed to them. Jeremiah then says, that he *took the cup* and *gave it to drink to all the nations:* he intimates that he had no desire to do this, but that necessity was laid on him to perform his office. He then shews who these nations were,—

18. *To wit,* Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; (as *it is* this day;)

18. Jerosolymæ et urbibus Jehudah, et regibus ejus, et principibus ejus, ad ponendum eos in vastitatem (*vel,* solitudinem,) in stuporem, in sibilum, et maledictionem, sicut dies hæc;

He begins with Jerusalem, as it is said elsewhere that judgment would begin at God's house. (1 Peter iv. 17.) And there is nothing opposed to this in the context of the passage; for though he had promised to the children of God a happy end to the evils which they were shortly to endure, he nevertheless enumerates here all the nations on whom God had bidden him to denounce judgments. In this catalogue the Church obtains the first place; for though God be the

judge of the whole world, he yet justly begins with his own Church, and that especially for two reasons—for as the father of a family watches over his children and servants, and if there be anything wrong, his solicitude is particularly manifested; so God, as he dwells in his Church, cannot do otherwise than chastise it for its faults;—and then, we know that they are less excusable, who, having been taught the will of God, do yet go on indulging their own lusts, (Luke xii. 47;) for they cannot plead ignorance. Hence is fulfilled what Christ declares, that those servants shall be more grievously beaten, who, knowing their master's will, yet obstinately disregard it. There is, then, a twofold fault in the members of the Church; and no comparison can be made between them and the unbelieving who are in thick darkness. Since God shines in his Church and shews the way, as Moses says, "Behold I set before you the way of life and of death; I therefore call heaven and earth to witness that there is no excuse for you." (Deut. xxx. 15, 19.) This, then, is the second reason why God first visits the sins of the faithful, or of those who are counted faithful.

There is also what appertains to an example: God chastises his own children lest he should seem by his indulgence to favour or countenance what is wicked and sinful. But this third reason is in a manner accidental; and therefore I wished to state it apart from the two other reasons. When, therefore, God so severely treats his own Church, the unbelieving ought to draw this conclusion, that if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? (Luke xxiii. 31.)

But the two things which I have before mentioned ought to be deemed by us as sufficient reasons why God, while suspending his vengeance as to the reprobate, punishes the elect as well as all those who profess themselves to be members of his Church. We now understand why Jeremiah mentions first the holy city, and then all the cities of Judah, the kings also and the princes; for God had with open bosom invited them to himself, but they had, as it were, from determined wickedness, provoked his wrath by despising both his Law and his Prophets.

He afterwards adds, *to make them a waste*, or a solitude. This was a grievous denunciation, no doubt, and we shall hereafter see that most became enraged against the holy man, and in their fury endeavoured to destroy him; yet he with an intrepid mind fully declared what God had commanded him. He adds, *an astonishment*, and in the third place, *an hissing*, even that they would become detestable to all; for hissing intimates contempt, reproach, and detestation. In the fourth place he mentions *a curse*. We have already said what the Prophet meant by this word, even that the Jews would become in this respect a proverb, so that when one cursed another, he would use this form, "May God destroy thee as he destroyed the Jews."

It is then added, *as at this day*. The Prophet refers, no doubt, to the time of the city's destruction. God had indeed even then begun to consume the people; but we shall hereafter see that the minds of the greater part were still very haughty, so that they often raised their crests and looked for a new state of things, and depended on aid from the Egyptians. But the Prophet here mentions what was not yet completed, and as it were by the finger, points out the day as having already come in which the city was to be destroyed and the temple burnt up. This, then, refers to the certainty of what he predicted. Some think that it was written after Jeremiah had been led into exile; but this conjecture has nothing to support it.[1] It seems to me enough to suppose that his object was to rouse the Jews from their security, and to shew that in a short time all that he predicted would be accomplished, and that they were no

[1] *Blayney* assents to this conjecture, and not without some reason: he considers that God's words are broken off at the end of verse 16, and are not resumed till the latter part of verse 26, where God again continues his words thus, "and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them." All the intermediate verses he includes in a parenthesis, and regards them as written either by Baruch or by the Prophet himself after the destruction of Jerusalem, when his prophecies were compiled: and this accounts for the words, "as at this day." But *Gataker* rejects this view, and considers this prophecy to have been announced after the Chaldean irruption in the third or fourth year of Jehoiakim, referred to in Daniel i. 1. The devastation then produced was great, and finally completed in the reign of Zedekiah.—*Ed.*

more to doubt of this than if the calamity was now before their eyes. It follows,—

19. Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;	19. Pharaoni (*pendit enim a superiori versu quod propinaverit calicem Pharaoni,*) regi Egyptio, servis ejus et principibus ejus et toti ejus populo;

It may here be asked, why he connects Pharaoh with the Jews, and assigns the second place to the Egyptians rather than to other nations? The reason is evident,—because the Jews expected deliverance from them; and the cause of their irreclaimable obstinacy was, that they could not be removed from that false confidence by which the devil had once fascinated them. They departed from God by making the Egyptians their friends; and when they found themselves unequal to the Assyrians, they turned their hopes to the Egyptians rather than to God; the prophets remonstrated with them, but with no success.

As, then, the occasion of ruin to the chosen people was Egypt, and as Pharaoh was, as it were, the fountain and cause of destruction to Jerusalem, as well as to the whole people, rightly does the Prophet, after having spoken of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, immediately mention Pharaoh in the second place; for he was a friend to the Jews, and they were so connected together that they were necessarily drawn together into destruction; for they had corrupted one another, and encouraged one another in impiety, and with united minds and confederate hearts kindled God's wrath against themselves.[1] The Prophet, then, could not have spoken of the Jews by themselves, but was under the necessity of connecting the Egyptians with them, for the state of both people was the same.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not to abuse thy paternal kindness, that when thou sparest us for a time, it is made by us the occasion of more audacity and liberty in sin,—O grant that we may be so subdued by thy scourges as to return without delay

[1] *Gataker* observes that servants, princes, and people are mentioned together with the king, in order to preclude every hope of escape; for the king might have been removed, and the country left without being much disturbed.—*Ed.*

to thee, and to seek reconciliation with thee through the blood of thine only-begotten Son, and also to be so displeased with our vices, that we may from the heart submit to thee, so as to be governed by thy Holy Spirit, until, having been cleansed from all our filth, we shall come to that blessed glory which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, and which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, thy Son Jesus Christ.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Sixth.

20. And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,

20. Et promiscuæ multitudini, et cunctis regibus terræ Uz, et cunctis regibus terræ Philistim et Ascalon et Gazæ et Echron, et reliquiis Azoth,

JEREMIAH, after having spoken of his own nation and of the Egyptians, now mentions other nations who were probably known by report to the Jews; for we see in the catalogue some who were afar off. He then does not only speak of neighbouring nations, but also of others. His object, in short, was to shew that God's vengeance was near, which would extend here and there, so as to include the whole world known to the Jews.

We stated yesterday the reason why he connected the Egyptians with the Jews; but now nothing certain can be assigned as a reason with regard to each of these nations; only it may be said in general, that the Jews were thus reminded, not only to acknowledge God's judgment towards them as an evidence of his wrath, but also to extend their thoughts farther and to consider all the calamities, which would happen to nations far as well as nigh, in the same light, so that they might know that human events revolve, not by chance, but that God is a righteous judge, and that he sits in heaven to chastise men for their sins.

It is a common proverb, that it is a solace to the miserable to see many like them; but the Prophet had something very different in view; for it was not his object to alleviate the grief of his people by shewing that no nations would be free from calamities; but his intention was to shew them in due time that whatever happened would proceed from God;

for if it had not been predicted that the Chaldeans would have the whole of the east under their dominion, it would have been commonly said, that the world was under the rule of blind fortune, and thus men would have become more and more hardened in their impiety; for it becomes the cause of obstinacy, when men imagine that all things happen by chance. And for this reason God severely reproves those who acknowledge not that he sends wars, famine, and pestilence, and that nothing adverse takes place except through his judgment. Hence the Jews were to learn before the time, that when God afflicted them and other nations, they might know that it had been predicted, and that therefore God was the author of these calamities, and that they might also examine themselves so as to acknowledge their sins; for they who dream that the world as to its evils is governed at random by fortune, do not perceive that God is displeased with them; and so they regard not what they suffer as a just punishment.

Many indeed confess God as the inflictor of punishment, and yet they complain against him. But these two things ought to be remembered,—that no adversity happens fortuitously, but that God is the author of all those things which men regard as evils,—and that he is so, because he is a righteous judge; which is the second thing. God then in claiming for himself the disposal of all events, and in declaring that the world is governed at his will, not only declares that the chief power and the supreme government is in his hand, but goes farther and shews, that things happening prosperously are evidences of his goodness and justice, and that calamities prove that he cannot endure the sins of men, but must punish them. To set forth this was the Prophet's design.

He says that God threatened *all the promiscuous multitude*.[1] The word עֵרֶב, *oreb*, means a swarm of bees; and it means also any sort of mixture; and hence, when Moses

[1] *Venema* and *Blayney* connect these words with the former verse, and consider that the mixed people in Egypt are meant; and this is most probable. So the *Sept.*, "and all that are mixed with them." The *Syr.* is, "and all the borders of it," that is Egypt. The *Vulg.* is a paraphrase, "and the whole generally."—*Ed.*

said that many went up with the people, he used this word. (Ex. xii. 38.) Nehemiah also says that he separated such mixtures from the people of God, lest they who had become degenerated, should corrupt true religion. (Neh. xiii. 3.) That the Church, then, might remain true and faithful, he says that he took away עֵרֶב, *oreb*, or this mixture. Now as to this passage, I have no doubt but that the Prophet speaks thus generally of the common people; and I extend this name to all the kingdoms, of which he will hereafter speak. He then adds, *And all the kings of the land of Uz.* We know that this was an eastern land. I know not why Jerome rendered it "Ausitis," and not as in the Book of Job, for the same word is found there, (Job i. 2;) and we find that Job was born in the eastern part of the world, for he was plundered by his neighbours, who were men of the east. Some think that it was Armenia; but it could hardly be a country so far off, for Cilicia was, with regard to Judea, in the middle between them. I, then, rather think that Uz was directly east to Judea.

He adds, *And all the kings of the land of the Philistines.* Whether Palestine had then many kings is uncertain; it seems indeed probable; but what seems doubtful to me, I leave as such. It is no objection that he mentions *all the kings*, since he afterwards speaks of all the kings of Tyre and Sidon, though neither Tyre nor Sidon had many kings; for they were only two cities. There is then no doubt, but that the Prophet in speaking of all the kings of the land, meant that though they succeeded one another, it was yet decreed in heaven, that all these nations should perish. He therefore intended to obviate every doubt; for the prophecy was not immediately fulfilled; but the nations, of whom he now speaks, retained for a time their state, so that the Prophet might have appeared false in his predictions. Hence he distinctly mentions *all the kings*, so that the faithful might suspend their judgment until the appointed time of God's vengeance came.

He afterwards mentions *Ashkelon;* which was not a maritime city, though not far from the sea. Then he adds עַזָּה, *oze*, which we call *Gaza*, for the Greek translators have

so rendered it. But what the Greek and Latin writers have thought, that it was called Gaza, because Cyrus deposited there his treasures while carrying on war here and there, is wholly absurd; and it was a frivolous conjecture which occurred to their minds, because Gaza means a treasure, and the Greek translators rendered Oze, Gaza; but it was entertained without much thought. The situation of the city is well known. He then mentions *Ekron*, a neighbouring city, not far from *Azotus*, which is also named. The Prophet says *Ashdod*, which the Greeks have rendered Azotus, and the Latins have followed them. We hence see that the Prophet refers to that part of the country which was towards Syria.

But it may be asked, why he names the *remnant of Ashdod?* Some think that he refers to neighbouring towns, not so much known, as Gath, which is elsewhere named, but less celebrated. But this exposition seems to me forced and absurd. The probability is, that Ashdod had been conquered, but that owing to its advantageous locality it was not wholly forsaken. For שארית, *sharit*, means what is left or remains after a slaughter. What remained then in Ashdod, he delivered up to God's sword, that it might be destroyed. It follows,—

21. Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,	21. Edom et Moab et filiis Ammon,

The same words are ever to be repeated, that Jeremiah made all these nations to drink the cup. He mentions the *Idumeans*, the posterity of Esau, and also the *Moabites*, the descendants of Lot, as also were the *Ammonites*. There was a relationship between these three nations and the Israelites; hence the Prophet seems designedly to have connected these three nations together. He adds—

22. And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which *are* beyond the sea,	22. Et omnibus regibus Tyri et omnibus regibus Sidonis, et omnibus regibus insulæ, quæ est (*vel*, qui sunt; *nam verbum nullum ponitur; potest igitur hoc tam ad reges ipsos quam ad insulam referri;* qui sunt *ergo*) ultra mare,

As to the word *Island*, the number is to be changed; for the Prophet means not one island, but the countries

beyond the sea. Some restrict the reference to Cyprus, Crete, Mitylene, and other islands in the Mediterranean; but it is a common way of speaking in Hebrew, to call all countries beyond the sea islands. "The kings of the islands shall come." (Psalm lxxii. 10.) The Prophet in that passage calls those the kings of the islands who would come in ships to Judea. So also in this place we may understand by the kings of the islands all those who were beyond the sea.

We now see that kings of one age only are not those summoned to God's tribunal; for why does the Prophet mention all the kings of Tyre and all the kings of Sidon? Was it possible for these two cities to have four or two kings at the same time? But we must bear in mind what I have already stated,—that the children of God were warned, lest they should entertain a too fervid expectation as to the fulfilment of this prophecy. It is then the same as if he had said, "Though God's vengeance may not come upon the present king of Tyre or of Sidon, it is yet suspended over all kings, and shall be manifested in its time."[1] Tyre and Sidon, we know, were cities of Phœnicia, and very celebrated; and Tyre had many colonies afar off, among which the principal was Carthage; and the Carthaginians offered honourable presents to it every year, in order to shew that they were its descendants. And Tyre itself was a colony of Sidon, according to historians; but it so prospered, that the daughter as it were swallowed up the mother. But it appears evident that there were kings there in the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, though in the time of Alexander both cities were republics; for many changes during that period had taken place in them. Now the Prophet says only, that

[1] The kings of Judah and the kings of other countries are found also mentioned; and the reason seems to be, that the calamities threatened to them did not come at once on one generation, but gradually on successive generations. Such was the case with respect to Judah, and also with other kingdoms; successive attacks were made until they were at last wholly subjugated.

As we find in Isaiah xxiii. 2, the people of Tyre called "the inhabitants of the isle," we may render the verse thus,—

22. And all the kings of Tyre, and all the kings of Sidon, even all the kings of the isle which is by the side of the sea.

This repetition was made on account of the power and wealth of Tyre, a place thought impregnable. See Isaiah xxiii.—*Ed.*

Tyre and Sidon would be involved in the punishment which he denounced on both kings and people. It follows—

23. Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all *that are* in the utmost corners,	23. Et Dedan et Thema et Buz, et cunctis terminatis in angulo (*alii vertunt*, atonsos coma, *sicut etiam* ix. *cap.* ; *sed illic de hac voce dixi quantum ferebat locus*,)

I shall now only touch briefly on the *extreme ones in a corner*, or those bounded by a corner, who were almost unknown to the Jews on account of their distance.[1] After having spoken of nations so very remote, that he might not by prolixity be tedious, he mentions *all the extreme ones in a corner*, that is, those who were bounded by the farthest limits. As to *Dedan, Tema, and Buz*, we know that these countries derived their names from their founders. Who Dedan was, we learn from Moses, and also who Tema and Buz were. (Gen. xxv. 3, 15 ; 1 Chron. v. 14.) Two of them were descendants of Abraham by Keturah.[2] There is no need of saying more of these countries, for they are not known by us at this day, and we cannot learn from geographers the extent of any of these countries; for there was hardly a place at the time when heathen writers began their records, which had not long before changed its name. We however conclude that these were eastern countries. It follows—

24. And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,	24. Et omnibus regibus Arabiæ, et omnibus regibus (*vertunt iterum*) Arabiæ (*sed mihi non placet, neque unquam mihi persuadebunt interpretes, qui tamen in hoc consentiunt, repeti proprium Arabiæ nomen ;* cunctos reges, *potius vertam*, promiscui vulgi, *vel, gentium hinc inde collectarum*) qui habitant in deserto,

The Prophet now mentions the *kings of Arabia*, who were neighbours on one side to the Jews. He has hitherto mentioned nations towards the sea; he has named many maritime towns, and also others which were at some distance

[1] See Note in vol. i. p. 506.

[2] This is not quite correct. *Dedan*—there are two of this name mentioned, Gen. x. 7, and Gen. xxv. 3; the latter is probably meant here. *Tema* was one of Ishmael's race, Gen. xxv. 15. See also Job vi. 19, and Isaiah xxi. 14.—*Buz* was one of Nachor's posterity, Gen. xxii. 21; and of this family was Elihu, the most remarkable of Job's friends; he was a Buzite. Job xxxii. 1-6.—*Ed.*

from the sea, and yet were not remote; for they were towns and countries intermediate between Judea and Syria or Cilicia, or verging towards Cilicia. He now speaks of Arabia, which was between Egypt and Babylon. And though Arabia was divided into three parts; it was however sterile where it bordered on Judea; it might therefore be said to be a desert.

But the Prophet, in the first place, mentions *the kings of Arabia*, and then the *miscellaneous kings*, as we may call them, that is, those who ruled in desert regions and were hardly of any repute; we, indeed, know that they were petty robbers; and these Arabs were sometimes called Schenites, because they dwelt in tents. I therefore consider that these, by way of contempt, were called *kings of the promiscuous multitude*, who excelled not in dignity nor in wealth; and hence the Prophet adds, that they *dwelt in the desert*, being a wandering people. It follows,—

25. And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

25. Et omnibus regibus Zimri, et omnibus regibus Elam, et omnibus regibus Medorum,

He now mentions nations more remote, but whose fame was more known among the Jews. We, indeed, know that the *Elamites*, who dwelt between Media and Persia, had ever been people of great repute. As to *Media*, it was a very large kingdom and wealthy, abounding in all delicacies; and we also know how fond of display were the Medes. With regard to *Zimri*,[1] it was an obscure nation in comparison with the Elamites and the Medes. The Prophet, however, intimates that every part of the earth, even the smallest kingdom, known to the Jews, would be visited by God's judgment, so that the whole earth, in every direction, would become a witness that God sits in heaven as a judge. It follows,—

26. And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with

26. Et omnibus regibus Aquilonis tam iis qui propinqui sunt quam qui remoti,

[1] *Blayney* considers *Zimri* to be the same with *Zimran*, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, and he and his brethren were sent to "the east country." (Gen. xxv. 2, 6.) The *Zamerœni*, mentioned by Pliny as inhabiting some part of Arabia, were probably the descendants of Zimri. —*Ed.*

another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which *are* upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

viro (*hoc est*, cuique) contra fratrem suum, et omnibus regnis terræ, quæ sunt super faciem terræ (*mutatur quidem nomen, ponit* הארץ, *ponit* האדמה:) et rex Sesach bibet post eos.

The Prophet speaks now of the kings of the north, who bordered on the king of Babylon; for as to Judea, Babylon was northward. He calls all those who were towards Chaldea the kings of the north. He then says, *Whether near or remote, every one shall be against his brother*, and, in short, *all the kingdoms of the earth on the face of the earth.* There is no doubt, as we shall see, but that the Prophet put in the last place the Chaldeans and their king. It is hence probable that what he here predicts was to be accomplished by the hand and power of the king of Babylon, who executed God's vengeance on all these nations. God, then, chose for himself the king of Chaldea as a scourge, and guided him by his hand in punishing all the lands mentioned here.

I have already reminded you that this was not predicted for the sake of the Jews, that they might derive any alleviation to their grief from the circumstance of having associates, because the condition of others was nothing better; but that God's design was another, that is, that in so great a confusion of all things, when heaven and earth, as they say, were blended together, they might know that nothing happens through the blind will of fortune. For God had already testified by the mouth of his servant what he would do, and from this prophecy it was easy to conclude that all these changes and violent commotions were the effects of God's judgment.

The Prophet, after having shewn that the most grievous calamities were nigh all the nations who were neighbours to the Jews, and whose fame had reached them, says, in the last place, that the *king of Sheshach would drink after them.* Hitherto the Prophet seems to have exempted the king of Babylon from all trouble and danger; for he has mentioned all the nations, and has spoken not only of those who were nigh the Jews, but also of the Persians, the Medes, and others. What, then, could have been the design of all this, if the king of Babylon had been passed by? It might have

been asked, how can it be right and consistent that this tyrant should escape punishment, though he was of all the most cruel and the most wicked? Hence the Prophet now says, that the king of Babylon, how much soever his violence prevailed among all nations, and raged unpunished, would yet in his time be brought to a reckoning. The meaning then is, that God would defer the punishment of the Chaldeans until he employed them in destroying all the nations of which Jeremiah has hitherto spoken.

Respecting the king of Babylon being called the *king of Sheshach*, a question has been raised, and some think that some unknown king is intended; for we know that the word is a proper name, as it appears from some passages of Scripture. (1 Kings xi. 40; 2 Chron. xii. 2.) But this opinion is not well founded; for the Prophet no doubt speaks here of some remarkable king; and there is also no doubt but that he reminded them of some most important event, so that there was no reason why delay should depress the minds of the faithful, though they saw that this Sheshach was not immediately punished with the rest. Others conjecture that Sheshach was a renowned city in Chaldea. But there is no necessity for us to adopt such light and frivolous conjectures. I have no doubt but that the opinion which the Chaldee paraphraser has followed is the true one, that is, that Sheshach was Babylon. For the sort of alphabet which the Jews at this day call אתבש, *atbash*, is no new invention; it appears from Jerome it had been long known; he, indeed, derived from great antiquity the practice, so to speak, of counting the letters backwards. They put the last letter, ת, in the place of א, the first, and then ש in the place of ב, and כ being in the middle of the letters was put for ל; and so they called Babel Sheshach.[1] And to

[1] Both *Venema* and *Gataker* regard this as one of the vagaries of the Rabbins, though countenanced by Jerome. Various have been the reasons assigned for calling Babylon Sheshach. Some derive the word from שיש, which means in Syriac, to dwell, to rest, and consider ך a formative letter; and then they render it "a great habitation." Others derive it from an Arabic root which means to be swift or to advance swiftly—the character of the sun or fire, which was deified. The third party say, that it signifies a feast, like the Saturnalian, which the Chaldeans called *ταξιαν*; for it was during a feast that Babylon was taken, so

designate Babylon by an obscure name was suitable to the design of the Prophet. But every doubt is removed by another passage in this Prophet, "How is Sheshach demolished! how fallen is the glory (or praise) of the whole earth! how overthrown is Babylon!" (Ch. li. 40.) There, no doubt, the Prophet explains himself; there is therefore no need to seek any other interpretation. It is a common thing, as we know, with the prophets to repeat the same thing in other words; as he had mentioned Sheshach in the first clause, to prevent any doubt he afterwards mentioned Babylon.

But here a question arises; why did not the Prophet openly and plainly denounce ruin on the king as well as on the Chaldean nation? Many think that this was done prudently, that he might not create an ill-will towards his own people; and Jerome brings forward a passage from Paul, but absurdly, where he says, "Until a defection shall come," (2 Thess. ii. 3;) but he did not understand that passage, for he thought that Paul spoke of the Roman empire. One error brings another; he supposed that Paul was cautious that he might not excite the fury of the Roman Emperor against the Church; but it was no such thing. Now, they who reject the opinion, which is the most correct, that Sheshach was Babylon, make use of this argument,—that the Prophet was not afraid to speak of Babylon, because he had declared openly of it what he had to say, as we have already seen in other places, and as it will appear more clearly hereafter. But I do not allow that the Prophet was afraid to speak of Babylon, for we find that he boldly obeyed God, so that he stood firm, as we may say, in the midst of many deaths; but I think that he concealed the name for another reason, even that the Jews might know that they had no

that there was thus an intimation given of this by calling him the king of this feast. See ch. li. 39.

But the most probable account is that given by *Gataker*, that Babylon was thus called from an idol in great repute in the city, named *Sheshach* or *Shach*, and that it was on the festival of this idol that the city was taken. This accounts for this name being given to it, when its destruction is especially referred to. Mishael, which terminated with God's name, was changed into Meschach, or rather Mishach, which contained the name of the Babylonian idol. (Dan. i. 7.)—*Ed.*

cause to be in a hurry, though the punishment of Babylon had been predicted, for the prophecy was, as it were, buried, inasmuch as the Prophet withheld the very name of Babylon. It was not, then, his purpose to provide for the peace of the Church, nor was he afraid of the Chaldeans, lest he should kindle their fury against God's people; he had no such thing in view, but wished rather to restrain too much haste.

And this appears from the context; *Drink*, he says, *shall the king of Sheshach after them;* that is, all these nations must drink before God shall touch the king of Babylon. He will not, then, be an idle spectator of all these calamities, but his severity will proceed through all lands until it reaches its summit; and then, he says, this king shall drink after the rest. Now, it might have seemed a poor consolation that God would for so long a time spare the king of Babylon; but all God's children ought nevertheless to have acquiesced in the admonition given them, that though they were to bear in mind that each of these nations were to be punished by God's hand, they were yet to believe that the king of Babylon would have his turn, and that they therefore were to restrain themselves, and not to be carried away by too hasty a desire to look for his punishment, but patiently to bear the yoke of tyranny laid on them, until the seasonable time came of which they had been reminded. It follows,—

27. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

27. Et dices ad eos, Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Bibite et inebriamini, vomite et cadite, et ne surgatis a facie gladii, quem ego mitto inter vos.

Here the Prophet returns to his former discourse. He had said that a cup was extended to him by God's hand, that he might give it to all nations to drink. He now repeats and confirms the same thing, not indeed that he brought this message to all the nations; for we have said the benefit arising from these predictions belonged only to the Jews. Neither the Tyrians nor the Sidonians ever knew that they were punished by God's hand when they were plundered by

their enemies; this never came to their minds, nor had this been ever taught them. The Prophet had not been appointed their teacher; but his duty was only to warn his own nation.

However, the Prophet, that his predictions might have greater authority, is here introduced as God's herald, denouncing ruin on all nations, *Thou shalt therefore say to them, Thus saith Jehovah*, &c. The true God was unknown to these heathens, except they had heard that God was worshipped in Judea; but at the same time they despised, yea, hated true religion. But, as I have already said, the Prophet addressed his own people, the Jews alone, though he spoke of aliens and distant nations. I cannot advance further now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since there are before our eyes so many evidences of thy judgments and of thy goodness, we may advance in the fear of thy name, and not go on to kindle thy wrath more against us, but that, being touched with true repentance, we may seek to be reconciled to thee, and that, commiserating the many evils, by which the world is at this day afflicted, we may also strive to restore those to the right way who seem to give themselves up to their own ruin, so that by converting those to thee who are now far away and aliens, thy name may be more glorified and proclaimed by us with one consent, through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Seventh.

We began yesterday to explain the verse in which Jeremiah bids *all nations* to drink of the cup until they were drunken. Of the metaphor of the cup an explanation has already been given: the reason is, because God in his infinite wisdom knew what every one deserved, or how just it was to chastise at one time in a lighter, and at another time in a heavier degree. As then the measure is not the same, the similitude of a cup is most suitable. Further, God sometimes gives a cup to drink, that he who cannot bear a heavier punishment may only taste it. For we know that God deals more severely with the strong and the obstinate:

but when any one is weak, he is treated more gently, and is made only to sip or to taste of the cup.

But the Prophet says here that they were to drink until they became drunken, according to what is said in another place, when the heathens are spoken of, "They shall even exhaust the very dregs." And God makes men drunken, as I have said before, even when he blinds them and gives them the spirit of giddiness or stupor. (Obad. verse 26.) But the word drunkenness refers to external chastisements. *Drink ye*, then, *and be drunken;* that is, "think ye not that you have suffered all, when God begins to punish you and has given you one draught only; but the Lord will make you thoroughly drunken." And hence he adds, *Vomit ye and fall;* for they who indulge in excess and fill themselves, so that they almost burst, must necessarily disgorge themselves. And vomiting disorders the brain, so that the feet can no longer perform their office, and no part of the body retains its power. The meaning then is, that as God had for a long time deferred his judgment, and all nations had hardened themselves when his long-suffering invited them to repentance, the most dreadful vengeance was now nigh them all, a vengeance which would compensate for the delay or the length of endurance.

Some interpreters hence conclude, that the punishment of all the nations of whom the Prophet now speaks, would be of no avail to them: but this seems not to me to be well founded. For he has spoken of the chosen people; and it is certain that some of them repented, however small the number was, and we shall also see that pardon and salvation are promised even to the heathens, after the execution of God's judgments. I therefore thus simply interpret these words,—that they should not only taste of the cup, but also drink to excess, so as to become like drunken men, wholly stupified, because the heaviness of their punishment would deprive them of reason. In no way more solid is the reason given by Jerome, when he says that the Prophet's discourse refers to the reprobate, because he subjoins, *And rise no more.* Jerome thought, that by this expression extreme despair is intimated. But the Prophet, in my judg-

ment, meant nothing else than that God's vengeance on all the nations would be so great that vestiges of it would remain after a length of time; as the case is with a drunkard, who cannot get rid of the effects of his excess in a night or in a day, but he remains stupid for some time, or becomes frantic. This is what the Prophet means when he says, *and they shall rise no more.*[1]

It now follows, *On account of the sword which I send among you.* He now expresses without a figure what he had said of drunkenness and vomiting, even that so great a horror would seize their minds, that they would lie down wholly stupified. But God declares that he would send a sword against them, that the Jews might understand, as it has been already stated, that when all things would be in a state of almost entire confusion, yet God's judgment would be within the limits of moderation. It now follows—

28. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink.

28. Et erit, si renuerint ad sumendum (*hoc est*, sumere) calicem e manu tua ad bibendum, tunc dices ad eos (*copula enim debet resolvi in adverbium temporis,*) Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Bibendo bibetis.

In this verse the Prophet intimates, that however refractory the nations might be, yet they could effect no good by their obstinacy, for willing or unwilling they would be constrained to drink of the cup. But in order to render the matter more striking, he introduces them as refusing; *If they refuse to take the cup, thou shalt say to them,* says God, *Drinking ye shall drink.* We have before said that the Prophet was not set a teacher over the heathens: hence what he declares here appertained not to aliens; but the whole benefit belonged to God's Church. Therefore what is said was spoken for God's people, even that they might know that as God had determined to punish the wickedness of

[1] It is better, as in verse 16, to connect "the sword" with this last verb: the verse then would read thus,—

27. And say thou to them, thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink ye and be drunken, vomit also and fall; and ye shall not rise up before the sword which I shall send among you.

The representation is, that they would be so drunken as not to keep on their legs, and that having fallen they would not be able to rise to make any resistance to the attack made upon them.—*Ed.*

men, none of all those threatened with judgment could possibly escape. Men indeed are often like unruly horses, who kick and are ferocious, and rage against their rider, and also bite; but the Prophet shews that God possesses a power sufficient to quell such obstinacy. He however reminds us how rebellious most would be, nay, almost all, when chastised by God's hand. It is indeed a rare instance when he who has sinned, willingly and calmly submits to God, and owns that he is justly punished: nay, they who confess that they have deserved some heavy punishment, do yet complain against God; for they dread his vengeance, and apprehend not his mercy, and promise not to themselves any pardon. There is then no wonder that the Prophet ascribes here to wicked men, both Jews and aliens, so hard and rebellious a spirit, that they would resist God, and try to extricate themselves from his hand, in short, that they would by all means attempt to escape his judgment.

This is the reason why he says, *If they refuse to take the cup from thy hand.* We hence see that we are not to take the words in their literal sense: for the Prophet did not speak to aliens, but what he had in view was the event itself, or rather the disposition of the people. These nations had indeed some power, and doubtless they strenuously defended their own safety; and this was the act of refusing intended by the Prophet. For when the enemy attacked the Moabites, they did not immediately yield; and the same was the case with others. Tyre was almost unassailable, for it was situated in the sea; where it was easy to prevent the approach of enemies. As then they had resolutely opposed their enemies, they are said to have *refused the cup from God's hand*, for they thought that they could keep off the coming evil. But however inconquerable they thought themselves to be, and how much soever they trusted in their own power, yet God says, that their efforts would be in vain and useless: *drinking*, he says, *ye shall drink.*[1] The reason follows—

[1] Or we may render the words literally as they are,—

Drink ye,—ye shall drink.

The first verb is an imperative, and the second is in the future tense, and may be rendered, "ye must drink," for the future may thus be often rendered.—*Ed.*

29. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts.

29. Quia ecce in urbe in qua invocatum nomen meum super eam, ego incipio ad malefaciendum (ad malum inferendum,) et vos innoxii eritis? non eritis innoxii; quia gladium ego advoco super incolas terræ, dicit Jehova exercituum.

A proof is added by comparing the less and the greater; for the Prophet reasons thus,—"If God spares not the city in which he has chosen a temple for himself, and designed his name to be invoked, how can he spare aliens to whom he has never made any promise, as he regarded them as strangers? If then the green tree is consumed, how can the dry remain safe?" This is the import of the passage. The Apostle uses the same argument in other words; for after having said that judgment would begin at God's house, he immediately shews how dreadful that vengeance of God was to be which awaited his open enemies! (1 Peter iv. 17.)

We may hence gather a useful doctrine. Since God not only declares that he will be indiscriminately the avenger of wickedness, but also summons in the first place his Church which he has chosen before his tribunal, its condition may seem to be worse than that of alien nations. Hence the minds of the godly, when they view things in this light, might be much depressed. It seems a singular favour of God, that he unites us to himself; but yet this honour seems only to lead to punishment: for God connives at the wickedness of heathens, and seems to bury them in oblivion; but as soon as we fall into sin, we perceive signs of his wrath. It would then be better to be at a distance from him, and that he should not be so solicitous in his care for us. Thus the faithful view the unbelieving as in a better state than themselves. But this doctrine mitigates all the sharpness of that grief, which might otherwise occasion great bitterness. For when it is represented to us, that God begins at his Church, that he may more heavily punish the unbelieving after having long endured them, and that they may thus be far more grievously dealt with than the faithful, as the dry tree is much sooner consumed than the green,—when therefore this is set before us, we have doubtless a ground for comfort, and that not small nor common.

We hence see why Jeremiah added this,—that how much soever the nations would resist God, they would yet be constrained, willing or unwilling, to yield, as God was more powerful than they; and for this reason, that since God would not spare his chosen people, the heathens could by no means escape unpunished, and not find him to be the judge of the world. Let then this truth be remembered by us, whenever our flesh leads us to complain or to be impatient; for it is better for us that God should begin with us, as at length the wicked shall in their turn be destroyed, and that we should endure temporal evils, that God may at length raise us up to the enjoyment of his paternal favour. And for this reason Paul also says, that it is a demonstration of the just judgment of God when the faithful are exposed to many evils. (2 Thess. i. 4, 5.) For, when God chastises his own children, of whose obedience he yet approves, do we not see as in a glass what is yet concealed? even the dreadful punishment that awaits all the unbelieving. God, then, represents to us at this day the destruction of his enemies by the paternal chastisements with which he visits us; and they are a certain proof or a lively exhibition of that judgment which the unbelieving fear not, but thoughtlessly deride.

Now, he says, *Behold I begin to bring evil*, &c. The verb הרע, *ero*, means properly to do evil; and it would be a strange thing to say that God does evil, were it not that common usage explains the meaning. They who are in any measure acquainted with Scripture know that calamities are called evils, that is, according to the perceptions of men. The Lord then is said to bring evil on men, not because he injures them or deals unjustly and cruelly with them, but because what is adverse to men's minds is thought to be by them, and is called evil. Then he says, *I begin to do evil in the city on which my name is called.*[1] God's name is called on a people, when he promises to be their guardian

[1] The literal rendering is, "which is called my name on it:" and the *Sept.* tried to imitate the Hebrew idiom by retaining "on it," inconsistently with the Greek idiom; but the *Vulg.* retains the character of the Latin, and renders the phrase, "on which my name is called." The *Welsh*, according to its idiom, is literally the Hebrew.—*Ed.*

and defender, and his name is said to be called upon men, when they betake themselves to his guardianship and protection.

But we must notice the real meaning,—that God's name is called on a people, when they are deemed to be under his guardianship and keeping; as God's name is called on the children of Abraham, because he had promised to be their God; and they boasted that they were his peculiar people, even on account of their adoption. So God's name was called on Jerusalem, because there was the Temple and the altar; and as God called it his rest or habitation, his name was there well known, according to what we say in French, *Se reclamer, il se reclame d'un tel*, that is, such an one claims this or that as his patron, so that he shelters himself under his protection. So also the Jews formerly called on God's name, when they said that they had been chosen to be his people: nay, this may also be applied to men; for the name of Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham was called on the twelve tribes, even for this reason,—because they regarded, when seeking to rely on God's covenant, their own origin, for they had descended from the holy fathers, with whom God had made his covenant, and to whom he had promised that he would be ever their God. All the Israelites called on Abraham, not that they offered him worship, but that, as they were his offspring, they might feel justly assured that the gratuitous covenant by which God had adopted them to himself, had been transmitted to them. But this calling may be also taken in another sense, even because they daily appeased God by sacrifices and prayers: when they committed their safety to God, there was a sacrifice always added, and reconciliation was also promised. Then to be called upon or invoked, נִקְרָא, *nukora*, may be taken in this sense, even that they knew that God was reconciled to them, when they from the heart repented. Since then God's name was called upon in that city, how was it possible that the Gentiles should escape that judgment to which the holy city was of be exposed?

But the former view seems to me the best; and there is no doubt but that God speaks here to the free adoption

by which he had chosen that people for himself: hence was the invocation or the glorying of which he now speaks.

But as it was difficult to make the Jews to believe what the Prophet had said, he dwells on the subject, and repeats what was before sufficiently clear. He not only says, *Shall ye be treated as innocent?* but he mentions the word twice, *Shall ye by being treated as innocent be treated as innocent?*[1] And thus he rebuked the perverse contumacy by which the heathens were filled, while looking on their wealth, their number, and other things, and at the same time disregarding all that the prophets proclaimed at Jerusalem, as though it was nothing to them. The question is in itself emphatical, "Can ye by any means be treated as innocent?" The verb נקה, *nuke*, means to be innocent, but it is applied to punishment; as the word עון, *oun*, which means iniquity, is used to designate punishment. So he is said not to be innocent who cannot exempt himself from God's judgment, nor be free from it.

He confirms this sentence when he says, *For a sword am I calling for on all the inhabitants of the earth, saith Jehovah of hosts.* This confirmation is by no means superfluous, for the insolence of the nations had increased through the forbearance of God, for they had for a long time, yea, for many ages, been in a quiet state, and had indulged themselves in their pleasures, and slept as it were in their own dregs, according to what is said elsewhere. The Prophet then says now, that God was calling for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth. For he had often and in various ways chastised his own people, while the Gentiles were not in any danger and free from troubles. (Jer. xlviii. 11.) But he says now that he was calling for a sword to destroy all those whom he seemed to have forgiven.

But God is said to have called for men as well as for a sword; for Nebuchadnezzar is said to have fought under the banner of God; he is said to have been like a hired soldier. But God now speaks of the sword, that we might

[1] Literally it is,—"And ye—shall ye, being acquitted, be acquitted? ye shall not be acquitted." The reference is to a judicial process, which is distinctly mentioned in the 31st verse.—*Ed.*

know that it is in his power to excite and to quell wars whenever it pleases him, and that thus the sword, though wielded by the hand of man, is not yet called forth by the will of man, but by the hidden power of God.* It follows,—

30. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread *the grapes*, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

30. Et tu prophetabis ad eos (*vel*, contra eos) omnia verba hæc, et dices illis, Jehova ab excelso rugiet, et ex habitaculo sanctitatis suæ edet vocem suam; rugiendo rugiet super habitaculum suum; celeusma (clamorem *potius generaliter*) quasi prementium torcular respondebit super cunctos incolas terræ.

The word הֵידָד, *eidad*, is rendered *celeusma*, a shout; but some render it a mournful singing; and it often occurs when the vintage is spoken of. *Celeusma*, as it is well known, is the shout of sailors. Its etymology is indeed general in its meaning; for κελεύειν is to exhort, to encourage; and then the noun is exhortation. But as this word is only used as to sailors, I prefer to adopt the word sound, or a loud noise.

Then he says, *Prophesy thou against them all these words, and say to them*, &c. I have already reminded you that no command was given to the Prophet to go to the heathens and to address each nation among them, or, in other words, to perform among them his prophetic office. But though he did not move a foot from the city, yet the influence of his prophecy reached through every region of the earth. The preaching therefore of Jeremiah was not in vain, for the Jews understood by what happened, that there was in the language of the holy man the power of the Spirit for the salvation of all the godly, and for the destruction of all the unbelieving. It is, then, in this sense that God bids and commands him again to prophesy against all nations, and to speak to them, not that he actually addressed them; but when he taught the Jews, his doctrine had an influence on all nations.

And he says, *Jehovah from on high shall roar, and from the habitation of his holiness shall send forth his voice.* The metaphor of roaring is sufficiently common. It seems indeed unsuitable to apply it to God; but we know how tardy men are, and how they indulge themselves in their own insensi-

bility, even when God threatens them. Hence God, adopting a hyperbolical mode of speaking, reproves their stupidity, as he cannot move them except he exceeds the limits of moderation. This then is the reason why he compares himself to a lion, not that we are to imagine that there is anything savage or cruel in him; but as I have said, men cannot be moved, except God puts on another character and comes forth as a lion, while yet he testifies not in vain elsewhere, that he is slow to wrath, inclined to mercy and long-suffering. (Psalm lxxxvi. 5, 15.) Let us then know that the impious contempt, by which most men are fascinated, is thus condemned, when God does as it were in this manner transform himself, and is constrained to represent himself as a lion.

Roar, then, he says, shall Jehovah, *from on high, and from the habitation of his holiness shall he send forth his voice.* When he speaks of *on high*, it is probable that heaven is meant; and *the habitation of his holiness* is often taken for the sanctuary or the Temple; but in other places, when the same words are repeated, heaven is also meant by the habitation of his holiness. There is yet nothing unsuitable, if we say that the Prophet here refers to the Temple, and that he thus refers to it, that he might raise upwards the minds of the Jews, who had their thoughts fixed on the visible Temple: nay, this seems to be required by the context. They indeed foolishly thought that God was bound to them, because it had been said, "Here is my rest for ever; here will my name and power dwell." (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) They strangely thought that there was no God but he who was inclosed in that visible and external sanctuary. Hence was that pride which Isaiah reproves and severely condemns when he says, "Where is the place for my rest? the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what place then will you build for me?" (Isaiah lxvi. 1.) The Prophet there does not merely speak, as many think, against superstition; but he rather beats down that foolish arrogance, because the people thought that God could never be separated from the material Temple. And yet it was not for nothing that the Temple had the name of being the royal throne of God, pro-

vided vices were removed. So now the Prophet, though he exalts God above the heavens, yet alludes to the visible sanctuary, when he says, "Roar shall Jehovah from on high, and from the habitation of his holiness shall he send forth his voice;" that is, though the Gentiles think that God sits and rests in a corner, yet his throne is in heaven: that he has chosen for himself a terrestrial habitation, is no reason why the government of the whole earth should not be in his hands; and therefore he manifests proofs of his vengeance towards all nations; but for the sake of his Church he will go forth as it were from his Temple: and he repeats again, *Roaring he shall roar on his dwelling*, or habitation.[1] Jerome usually renders the last word ornament, beauty; and yet this passage sufficiently proves that it cannot mean any other thing than habitation, as well as many other passages.

He afterwards proceeds to another comparison, *He will respond a shout*, as those who tread the wine-press *against all the inhabitants of the earth.* This repetition and variety confirm what I have said,—that God hyperbolically set forth the vehemence of his voice in order to fill with terror the secure and the torpid. And the Prophet seems here to intimate, that though there would be none to cheer, yet God's voice would be sufficiently powerful. For they who tread the wine-press mutually encourage one another by shouting; one calls on another, and thus they rouse themselves to diligence. There is also a mutual concord among sailors, when they give their shouts, as well as among the workmen who tread the grapes in the wine-press. But though God would have no one to rouse him, yet he himself would be sufficient; *he will respond a shout.*[2] The Prophet might have used an-

[1] Or "against his habitation," or "resting-place," as rendered by *Blayney;* "his place," is the *Sept.;* and "his habitation," is the *Syr.* The *Vulg.* is Jerome's version.—*Ed.*

[2] This verse seems to refer only to the Jews, and the following to the nations, as to their doom. God is represented in the latter part of this verse as responding to the shout of all the nations against his own people,—

Roaring he will roar against his own habitation;
A shout like that of treaders of grapes
Will he respond to all the inhabitants of the earth.

This rendering prevents the necessity of giving an unusual meaning to עַל, as it is commonly done. *Cocceius* takes this view of the passage.—*Ed.*

other word; but he says, he will *respond*—to whom? even to himself; that is, though all united to extinguish God's vengeance, yet he will come forth a conqueror, nor will he have any need of help. It then follows,—

31. A noise shall come *even* to the ends of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them *that are* wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.

31. Pervenit (*hoc est*, perveniet) sonitus (*vel*, impetus) ad extremitatem terræ; quia lis Jehovæ cum gentibus, judicium (*id est*, contentio, *vel*, disceptatio) ei contra omnem carnem; impios dabit (tradet) ipsos ad gladium, dicit Jehova.

He pursues the same subject; he says that there would be a dreadful assault, and that it would extend to the extreme parts of the earth. The word שָׁאוֹן, *shaun*, means a noise or sound; but it is also taken for violence or assault; and either meaning would not be unsuitable here. *The sound* then, or assault, *shall come to the extreme parts of the earth.* It then follows, that God had a strife with all nations; and here the Prophet seems to obviate a question that might have been raised, "What does this mean? that God will suddenly raise a commotion, after having been quiet and still for so many ages, without giving any symptom of his vengeance?" For we have said that the nations here mentioned had been long in a tranquil state. Hence the Prophet answers this unexpressed objection and says, that God *had a contention* with them.

The time of contending is not always: he who does not immediately bring his adversary before the judge, but deals kindly with him, and seeks to obtain amicably from him what is right, does not thereby forego what is justly due to him; but when he finds that the contumacy of his adversary is such that his kind dealing effects nothing, he may then litigate with him. The same thing is now expressed by the Prophet, even that God would now *contend with the nations and dispute with all flesh.* God is indeed, properly speaking, the judge of the world; and there is no arbiter or a judge in heaven or on earth to be found before whom he can dispute; but yet this mode of speaking ought to be especially noticed; for God thus silences all those complaints which men are wont to make against him. Even they who are a

hundred times proved guilty, yet complain against God when he severely punishes them, and they say that they are made to suffer more than they deserve. Hence God for this reason says, that when he punishes he does not exercise a tyrannical power, but that he does as it were dispute with sinners. At the same time he sets forth his own goodness by representing the end he has in view; for what he regards in rigidly punishing wickedness, is nothing else than to obtain his own rights; and as he cannot secure these by kind means, he extorts them as it were by the aid of laws.[1]

Let us then observe, that nothing is detracted from God's power and authority, when it is said, that he disputes or contends with men; but that in this way all those clamours are checked which the ungodly raise against him, as though he raged immoderately against them, and also that thus the end of all punishment is pointed out, even that God condescends to assume the character of an opponent, and proposes nothing else than to require what is reasonable and just, like him who having a cause to try before the judge, would willingly agree beforehand, if possible, with his adversary; but as he sees no hope, he has recourse to that remedy. So God contends with us; for except we were wholly irreclaimable, we might be restored to his favour; and reconciliation would be ready for us, were we only to allow him his rights.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seekest continually in various ways to restore us to thyself,—O grant, that we may not by our untameable perverseness resist thy holy and kind admonitions, nor continue torpid in our drowsiness, but anxiously flee to thee, and so humbly solicit pardon, that we may thus shew that we

[1] The terms are legal terms,—

31. Gone has the sound to the extremity of the earth;
For a contention had Jehovah with the nations,
Into judgment hath he entered with all flesh;
The wicked—he gave them to the sword, saith Jehovah.

The past is evidently used for the future. "The sound" then was to go forth, and for the reasons here assigned,—God would have a dispute with all, would try the matter as it were by a judicial process, and would give up the condemned, the wicked, to the sword. The object of this representation is very correctly stated by *Calvin.—Ed.*

really and habitually repent, so that thy name may in every way be glorified, until we shall come into thy celestial glory, through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninety-Eighth.

32. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

32. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Ecce malum egredietur a gente in gentem, et tempestas magna excitabitur a lateribus terræ.

JEREMIAH goes on with the subject which we began to explain in the last Lecture. He had before prophesied of God's judgments, which were nigh many nations, and which referred to almost all the countries near and known to the Jews, and to some that were afar off. The substance of what has been said is,—that God, who had long spared the wickedness of men, would now become an avenger, so that it might openly appear, that though he had deferred punishment, he would not allow the ungodly to escape, for they would in proper time and season be called to give an account.

To the same purpose is what he adds here, *go forth shall evil from nation to nation.* The explanation by some is, that one nation would make war on another, and that thus they would destroy themselves by mutual conflicts; and this meaning may be admitted. It seems, however, to me that the Prophet meant another thing, even that God's vengeance would advance like a contagion through all lands. And according to this view he adds a metaphor, or the simile of a storm, or a tempest, or a whirlwind; for when a tempest arises, it confines not itself to one region, but spreads itself far and wide. So the Prophet now shews, that though God would not at one time punish all the nations, he would yet be eventually the judge of all, for he would pass far and wide like a storm. Thus, then, I interpret the passage, not that the nations would make war with one another, but that when God had executed his judgment on one nation, he would afterwards advance to another, so that he would make no end until he had completed what Jeremiah had foretold.

And this view appears still more evident from the second clause of the verse, for this cannot be explained of intestine

wars, *raised shall be a tempest from the sides of the earth.* We hence see that the meaning is, that God would not be wearied after having begun to summon men to judgment, but would include the most remote, who thought themselves beyond the reach of danger. As when a tempest rises, it seems only to threaten a small portion of the country, but it soon spreads itself and covers the whole heavens; so also God says, that his vengeance would come *from the sides of the earth*, that is, from the remotest places, so that no distance would prevent the completion of what he had foretold by his servant.

But this may also be accommodated to our case; for whenever we see that this or that nation is afflicted by any calamity, we ought to remember this truth, that God seasonably warns us, that we may not abuse his patience, but anticipate him before his scourge passes from some side of the earth to us. In short, as soon as God manifests any sign of his wrath, it ought instantly to occur to us, that it may spread in a moment through all the extremities of the earth, so that no corner would be exempted. For if he makes known his power in the whirlwind or the storm, how will it be, when he makes a fuller and a nearer manifestation of his judgment, by stretching forth his hand as it were in a visible manner? This, then, is the import of this verse. It afterwards follows,—

33. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

33. Et erunt interfecti Jehovæ, in die illa ab extremitate terræ ad extremitatem terræ: non plangentur, et non colligentur, et non sepelientur; stercus in superficie terræ erunt (*id est*, pro stercore.)

This verse explains what I have just said; and hence it also appears that the Prophet did not speak of mutual slaughters inflicted by one nation on another, but that he only declared that God's wrath would spread like a storm so as to extend to all nations and lands. The Prophet no doubt continues the same subject; and we see why he says here, *And the slain of Jehovah shall be in that day*, &c.; he calls our attention to God alone; he will speak otherwise here-

after. He does not set here before us the ministers of God's vengeance, but God himself as acting by himself.

Hence he says, *the slain of Jehovah;* some read, "the wounded;" and חלל, *chelal*, means to wound and to kill; but "the slain" is more suitable here. *The slain* then *of Jehovah shall be from one extremity of the earth to the other;* as though he had said, that God would not be satisfied with punishing three or four nations, but would shew himself the judge of all the countries of the earth.

Now this passage is worthy of special notice; for we often wonder why God connives at so many crimes committed by men, which none of us would tolerate. But if we consider how dreadful was the tempest of which the Prophet now speaks, we ought to know that God rests for a time, in order that the ungodly and the wicked might be the less excusable. It was at the same time doubtless a sad spectacle, when so many regions and provinces were unceasingly suffering various calamities, when one nation thought itself better off than its neighbours, but presently found itself more cruelly treated. And yet this was generally the case, for God's wrath extended to the extremities of the earth.

He amplifies the atrocity of the evil by mentioning three things,—*They shall not be lamented, nor gathered, nor buried; but they shall be as dung, and shall thus lie on the face of the earth.* We have said in other places that lamentation does no good to the dead; but as it is what humanity requires, the want of it is rightly deemed a temporal punishment. So when any one is deprived of burial, it is certainly nothing to the dead if his body is not laid in a grave; for we know that God's holy servants have often been either burnt or hung or exposed to wild beasts; and the whole Church complains that dead bodies were lying around Jerusalem and became food to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the earth. But these things do not disprove the fact, that burial is an evidence of God's paternal kindness towards men. For why has he appointed that men should be buried rather than brute animals, except that he designed it to be an intimation of an immortal life? As, then, burial is a sign of God's favour, it is no wonder, that he often de-

clares to the reprobate that their dead bodies would be cast away, so as not to be honoured with a grave.

But we must remember this truth,—that temporal punishments happen in common to God's children and to aliens; God extends without any difference temporal punishments to his own children and to the unbelieving, and that in order that it may be made evident that our hope ought not to be fixed on this world. But however this may be, it is yet true that when God punishes the unbelieving in this way, he adds at the same time some remark by which it may be understood, that it happens not in vain nor undesignedly, that those are deprived of burial, who deserve that God should exterminate them from the earth, and that their memory should be obliterated, so that they should not be connected among men. But we have said also in another place, that such expressions admit of another meaning, which yet is not at variance with the former, but connected with it, and that is, that so great would be the slaughter, that none would be left to shew this kindness to his friend or to his neighbour or to his brother. For when four or ten or a hundred die, they may be buried; but when God slays by the sword a great number in one day, none are found to take care of burying the dead, as few remain alive, and even they dread their enemies. When therefore the prophets say that those whom God slew would be without lamentation and burial, they intimate that so great would be the number, that all would lie on the ground; for no one would dare to perform this humane act towards the dead, and were all to do their utmost, they would not be able, as the number would be so great.

Thus Jeremiah confirms what we have said,—that God's vengeance would extend to all lands and all nations, so as to involve in ruin the nobles as well as the common people, and to leave remaining but a small number.

For the same purpose he adds what follows, that they would be as *dung on the face of the earth.* This is added by way of contempt. It was then hardly credible, that so many illustrious, wealthy, and powerful nations could thus in so short a time be destroyed. But the Prophet, in order to

shake off this false conceit, says that they would become like dung, that however great their dignity and power, their wealth and strength, might be, they could not yet escape the hand of God, for he would reduce to nothing the glory of the whole world. We now perceive the real meaning of the Prophet. It then follows—

34. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves *in the ashes*, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

34. Ululate pastores, et clamate, et volutate vos eximii gregis; quia impleti sunt dies vestri ad mactandum, et dispersiones vestræ (*vel*, afflictiones, confractiones;) et cadetis tanquam vas desiderii (*id est*, pretiosum.)

I doubt not but that the Prophet now turns his discourse especially to his own nation, which interpreters have not observed, and hence have not understood the meaning of the Prophet. He prophesied of God's judgments, that the Jews might know that they in vain looked for impunity, as the Lord would not pardon the ignorant and destitute of all true knowledge, who might have pretended their ignorance as an excuse; and also that this comfort might support the minds of the godly, that the heathens, involved in the same guilt, would be subjected to the same judgment; and lastly, that knowing the difference between them and other nations, they might flee to God's mercy and be encouraged to repent by entertaining a hope of pardon. After having then treated this general subject, he now returns to the people over whom he was appointed a teacher. He might indeed have declared from an eminence what was to take place through the whole earth; for so extensive was the office of a herald which God had conferred on him. He might then by the virtue of his office have denounced ruin on all nations; but he ought not to neglect his special care for the chosen people. And so I explain this passage; for he now again directs his discourse to the Jews.

Hence he says, *Howl, ye pastors, and cry*, &c. By pastors he means the king and his counsellors, the priests and other rulers; and by *the choice of the flock* he seems to understand the rich, whose condition was better than that of the common people. Some in a more refined manner consider the *choice*

of the flock to have been those void of knowledge, unlike the scribes and priests and the king's counsellors; but this view seems not to be well-founded. I therefore adopt what is more probable,—that the *choice of the flock* were those who were rich and high in public esteem, and yet held no office of authority in the commonwealth or in the Church. However this may be, the Prophet shews, that as soon as God began to put forth his hand to punish the Jews, there would be no ranks of men exempt from lamentation, for he would begin with the pastors and the choice of the flock.

He adds that *their days were fulfilled*. Here he indirectly condemns that wicked security which had for a long time hardened them, so that they despised all threatenings; for God had now for many years called on them, and had sent his Prophets one after another; when they saw the execution of judgment suspended over them, they considered it only as a bugbear. "Well, let the prophets continue to pronounce their terrors, if they will do so, but nothing will come of them." Thus the ungodly turned God's forbearance into an occasion for their obstinacy. As then this evil was common among the Jews, the Prophet now says, by way of anticipation, that their days were fulfilled. For there is to be understood this contrast, that God had spared them, not that he had his eyes closed, or that he had not observed their wicked deeds, but that he wished to give them time to repent; but when he saw that their wickedness was unbearable, he now says that their days were completed. And he adds, to be *killed* or slain. I wonder that learned interpreters render this, "that they may say one another." There is no need of adding anything, for the Prophet means to express no such sentiment, nor is this what he denounces here on the Jews, to [illegible] on the contrary we know that they were slain by aliens, even by the Chaldeans. This sense [illegible] with history.

It is added [illegible] fulfilled [illegible]

[illegible]

your breakings. The verb מוּץ, *puts*, means to scatter or to dissipate, and also to afflict, to tear; and the sense of tearing or breaking is what I prefer here. And he adds, ***And ye shall fall as a precious vessel.*** This simile appears not to be very appropriate, for why should he not rather compare them to an earthen vessel, which is of no value and easily broken? But his object was to point out the difference in their two conditions, that though God had honoured them with singular privileges, yet all their excellency would not keep them safe; for it often happens that a vessel, however precious, is broken. And he speaks not of gold or silver vessels, but of fragile vessels, once in great esteem. That he might then more grievously wound them, he says that they had been hitherto precious vessels, or a precious vessel; for he speaks of them all in the singular number, and that they were to be broken; and thus he confirms what I said on the last verse, that hypocrites in vain trusted in their present fortune, or in the superior blessings of God, for he could turn to shame whatever glory he had conferred on them. It follows,—

35. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.

35. Et peribit fuga a pastoribus, et evasio ab eximiis gregis.

He explains what we have now observed, for he had bidden the pastors to howl and the choice of the flock to roll or to

Because fulfilled are your days
For the slaughter and *for* your dispersions;
And ye shall fall like a precious vessel.

The word באפר, "in the dust," is connected with the verb here used in chap. vi. 26, and in Ezek. xxvii. 30, and it is supplied here by the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* The line is rendered by the *Sept.*,—

And mourn, ye rams of the flock.

But the verb has no other sense but that of rolling, though the other word may be rendered "rams," as it is in the masculine gender.

Venema gives the following version,—

Howl, ye pastors, and cry aloud,
And sprinkle yourselves *with dust*, ye illustrious of the flock;
For fulfilled are your days to be sacrificed;
And *there shall be* your breakings,
And ye shall fall like a precious vessel.

He considers the first and the fourth line as connected, and the second and the third; the pastors were to be broken, and the illustrious of the flock to be slain in sacrifice. There is certainly a congruity in the parts thus viewed.—*Ed.*

prostrate themselves in the dust; he now gives the reason, even because they could not preserve their lives, no, not by an ignominious flight. It is indeed very miserable, when any one cannot otherwise secure his life than by seeking exile, where he must be poor, and needy, and despised; but even this is denied by the Prophet to the king and his counsellors, as well as to the rich through the whole city and the whole land: *Perish*, he says, shall *flight* from them. This mode of speaking is common in Hebrew: "Flight," says David, "has perished from me," (Ps. cxlii. 5;) that is, I find no way of escape. So here, *Perish shall flight;* that is, while looking here and there in order to escape from danger, they shall be so shut up on every side, that they shall necessarily fall a prey to their enemies. It follows,—

36. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, *shall be heard:* for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.

36. Vox clamoris pastorum et ululatus eximiorum gregis, quia perdidit Jehova pascua eorum.

He not merely repeats the same thing in other words, but adds also something more grievous, that God would render desolate their pastures. He pursues the same metaphor; for as he used this comparison in speaking of the king's counsellors and the priests, so now he does the same; and what he means by pastures is the community, the people, in the city and in the country;[1] as though he had said, that they had hitherto ruled over that land which was rich and fertile, and in which they enjoyed power and dignity, but that now they would be deprived of all these benefits. He afterwards adds,—

37. And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

37. Et peribunt (*vel*, succidentur, *vertunt* alii) pascua pacis (tuguria pacis, *hoc est*, tranquilla) a facie excandescentiæ (*vel*, furoris) iræ Jehovæ.

He goes on with the same subject, that the tents, previously tranquil, would perish or be destroyed. And he designedly calls their dwellings peaceable; for the Jews, having found that their enemies had not before disturbed them, still promised to themselves the same good fortune in future.

[1] So the *Targ.* renders the sentence, "For the Lord hath destroyed their people."—*Ed.*

And the faithful indeed do act thus rightly, and justly conclude from God's previous benefits that he will be kind to them as he had ever been so; but hypocrites, though they repent not, yet absurdly think that God is bound to them; and though they daily provoke his wrath, they yet securely continue in their confidence of having peace. Since God then had until that time deferred the grievousness of his wrath, the Prophet says, that though their tents had been peaceable,[1] yet they could not be exempted from destruction as soon as the indignation of God's wrath went forth. It might have been enough to make use of one of these words, either of חרון, *cherun*, or of אף, *aph;* but the Prophet used the two, indignation and wrath,[2] in order that he might fill the wicked with more terror; for as they were obstinate in their wickedness, so they were not moved except God doubled his strokes and set forth the extremity of his wrath. It follows,—

38. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

38. Dereliquit tanquam leo tabernaculum suum; quia redacta est terra eorum in vastitatem a facie iræ oppressoris (*aut*, prædonis) et a facie excandescentiæ iræ ejus.

The Prophet in the last verse reminds us, that the Jews in vain trusted in God's protection, for he would forsake his own Temple as well as the city. It was as it were a common saying among them, "He has said, This is my rest for ever." (Ps. cxxxii. 14.) But hypocrites did not consider that he could still stand faithful to his promises, though he did not suffer them to go unpunished. They could not therefore connect these two things together,—that God would be

[1] The word rendered "tents" means sometimes dwellings, or habitations, and sometimes pastures; and it is thus variously translated in our version, according to what the context requires. As "pastures" are mentioned in the previous verse, tents, or habitations, would be the best word here, and more suitable to the verb that is used, which means to reduce to silence, or to level, that is, with the ground, and hence to demolish. The rendering of the *Vulg.* is "fields—arva," but of the *Syr.* and *Targ.* "habitations." *Venema* and *Blayney* have "folds," which are probably the habitations intended.—*Ed.*

[2] Literally it is, "through the burning of the wrath of Jehovah." The word "fury," by which it is often rendered, is by no means suitable. The Versions vary: "the wrath of indignation" is the *Sept.;* "the wrath of fury" the *Vulg.;* "boiling wrath" the *Syr.;* and "the fury of wrath" the *Targ.* The same words occur at the end of the next verse.—*Ed.*

always mindful of his covenant,—and that still he would be the judge of his Church.

This is the reason why the Prophet now says, that God would *forsake as a lion his tabernacle.* Some give this explanation, that he would go forth for a short time, as hungry lions are wont to do; but this is too far-fetched. I therefore have no doubt that God sets forth his power under the character of a lion; for the Jews would have been feared by all their enemies, had not God changed as it were his station. But as they had expelled him by their vices, so that he had no more an habitation among them, hence it was that they became exposed to the plunder of all nations. The import of the passage then is, that as long as God dwelt in the Temple he was like a lion, so that by his roaring alone he kept at a distance all nations and defended the children of Abraham; but that now, though he had not changed his nature, nor was there anything taken away or diminished as to his power, yet the Jews would not be safe, for he would forsake them.[1]

And the reason is added, which clearly confirms what has been said, *For their land* (he refers to the Jews) *shall be desolate.* But whence this desolation to Judea, except that it was deprived of God's protection? For had God defended it, he could have repelled all enemies by a nod only. But as he had departed, hence it was that they found an easy access, and that the land was thus reduced to a waste.

It is added, *on account of the indignation of the oppressor.* Some render the last word "dove," but not correctly. They yet have devised a refined meaning, that God is called a dove because of his kindness and meekness, though his wrath is excited, for he is forced to put on the character of another through the perverseness of men, when he sees that he can do nothing by his benevolence towards them. But this is a

[1] Another view is taken by many, that God is compared to a lion forsaking his covert for the sake of prey; so *Grotius, Gataker, Lowth, Henry,* and Adam *Clarke. Scott* seems to agree with *Calvin's* view; which seems to be favoured by what follows, "for become has their land a waste," &c.; though this may comport also with the other view, for this may have been stated as a proof that God had gone forth as a lion seeking his prey; that is, to destroy them.—*Ed.*

far-fetched speculation. The verb יָנָה, *ine*, means to oppress, to take by force; and as it is most frequently taken in a bad sense, I prefer to apply it here to enemies rather than to God himself. There are many indeed who explain it of God, but I cannot embrace their view; for Jeremiah joins together two clauses, that God would forsake his Temple, as when a lion departs from his covert, and also that enemies would come and find the place naked and empty; in short, he intimates that they would be exposed to the will and plunder of their enemies, because they would be at that time destitute of God's aid. And as he had before spoken of the indignation of God's wrath, so now he ascribes the same to their enemies, and justly so, for they were to execute his judgments; what properly belongs to God is ascribed to them, because they were to be his ministers.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to gather us, so that we may be under thy protection and care, and to offer thyself to be our Shepherd, and even to exhibit thyself as such through thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we may willingly obey thee and hearken to the voice of that Shepherd whom thou hast set over us, so that we may be preserved to the end by thy goodness and power, and never wander from thee nor be carried away by our lusts, but so continue under the shadow of thy wings, that thou mayest be ever present with us and check our enemies, so that we may remain safe under thy protection throughout life, as well as in death, through the same Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

[1] There are several MSS. which have חרב, sword, for חרון, burning or indignation, and so the *Sept.* and the *Targ.*; and "the oppressing sword," חרב היונה, is found in two other places in Jeremiah, xlvi. 16, and l. 16. It is to be also observed, that חרון is very seldom used but in connection with אף, and we have it again in the next clause. The true reading then most probably is חרב. The verse would then be as follows,—

38. Left hath he like a lion his covert;
For their land hath become a desolation
Through the oppressing sword,
And through the burning of his wrath.

The כי might be rendered "therefore," instead of "for;" and thus the meaning would be more evident. See verses 30 and 31, where "the roaring" as of a lion, and the "sword," are both mentioned; and this confirms the view here given. In the two last lines, "the oppressing" or "devastating sword" is first referred to,—the visible effect, and then "the burning of his wrath"—the cause; an order often to be seen in the Prophets.—*Ed.*

Lecture Ninety-Ninth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word from the Lord, saying.

2. Thus saith the Lord, Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.

1. *Principio regni Joakim filii Josiæ, regis Jehudah, fuit sermo hic a Jehova, dicendo,*

2. *Sic dicit Jehova, Sta in atrio templi Jehovæ, et loquere ad omnes urbes Jehudah (id est, omnes cives urbium Jehudah), quæ veniunt ad orandum in templum Jehovæ, non omnes sermones quos mandavero tibi ad loquendum ad ipsos (hoc est, loquaris ipsis); ne diminuas verbum.*

This chapter contains a remarkable history, to which a very useful doctrine is annexed for Jeremiah speaks of repentance, which forms one of the main points of true religion, and he shews at the same time that the people were rejected by God, because they perversely despised all warnings, and could by no means be brought to a right mind. We shall find these two things in this chapter.

He says that this word came to him at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, of which king we have spoken in other places, where Jeremiah related other discourses delivered in his reign. We hence conclude that this book was not put together in a regular order, but that the chapters were collected, and from them the volume was formed.

The time [illegible] that the [illegible] men have [illegible] evils, they [illegible] be happy [illegible] probably [illegible] to reign [illegible] restored [illegible] circumstances [illegible] past hope [illegible] that they [illegible]

pears that the reprobate were become more and more exasperated by the scourges of God, and had never been truly and really humbled. This was the reason why Jeremiah, according to God's command, spoke so sharply.

I pass by other things and come to the words, that *the word of Jehovah came* to him. He thus arrogated nothing to himself; but he testifies how necessary it was, especially among a people so refractory, that he should bring nothing of his own, but announce a truth that came from heaven. A general subject might be here handled, which is, that God alone is to be heard in the Church, and also that no one ought to assume to himself the name of a prophet or a teacher, except he whom the Lord has formed and appointed, and to whom he has committed his message; but these things have been treated elsewhere and often and much at large; and I do not willingly dwell long on general subjects. It is then enough to bear in mind the purpose for which Jeremiah says that the word of Jehovah came to him, even that he might secure authority to himself; he does not boast of his own wisdom nor of anything human or earthly, but says only that he spoke what the Lord had commanded him.

He adds, *Thus saith Jehovah, Stand in the court of the house* (literally, but house means the Temple) *of Jehovah*. It was not allowed the people to enter into the Temple; hence the Prophet was bidden to abide in the court where he might be heard by all. He was, as we have seen, of the priestly order; but it would have been but of little avail to address the Levites.[1] It was therefore necessary for him to go forth and to announce to the whole people the commands of God which are here recited: and he was to do this not only to the citizens of Jerusalem, but also to all the Jews; and this is expressly required, *speak to all the cities of Judah*; and then it is added, *who come to worship in the*

[1] Indeed his message does not seem to have been to the priests nor to the false prophets, but to the people who came to worship, as though it was useless to address them. There are none in so hopeless a state as unbelieving and corrupt priests and false prophets: the people led astray by them may be restored, but their own case is almost past hope. This appears to be marked here, for they are passed by, while the people are addressed. — Ed.

Temple of Jehovah. God seems to have designedly anticipated the presumption of those who thought that wrong was done to them, when they were so severely reproved; "What! we have left our wives and children, and have come here to worship God; we have laid aside every attention to our private advantage, and have come here, though inconveniently; we might have lived quietly at home and enjoyed our blessings; we have incurred great expenses, undertaken a tedious journey, brought sacrifices, and denied ourselves as to our daily food, that God might be worshipped; and yet thou inveighest severely against us, and we hear nothing from thy mouth but terrors; is this right? Does God render such a reward to his servants?"

Thus then they might have contended with the Prophet; but he anticipates these objections, and allows what they might have pleaded, that they came to the Temple to offer sacrifices; but he intimates that another thing was required by God, and that they did not discharge their duties in coming to the Temple, except they faithfully obeyed God and his Law. We now see why the Prophet said, that he was sent to those who came up to Jerusalem to worship God. The deed itself could not indeed have been blamed; nay, it was highly worthy of praise, that they thus frequented the worship of God; but as the Jews regarded not the end for which God had commanded sacrifices to be offered to him, and also the end for which he had instituted all these external rites, it was necessary to remove this error in which they were involved.

Speak, he says, *all the words which I have commanded thee to speak to them.* The Prophet again confirms, that he was not the author of what he taught, but only a minister, who faithfully announced what God had committed to him; and so the people could not have objected to him by saying, that he brought forward his own devices, for he repelled such a calumny. The false prophets might have also alleged similar things; but Jeremiah had certain evidences as to his calling, that the Jews, by rejecting him, condemned themselves, for their own consciences fully convicted them. But from this passage, and from many like passages, we may

draw this conclusion,—that no one, however he may excel in powers of mind, or knowledge, or wisdom, or station, ought to be attended to, except he proves that he is God's minister.

He afterwards adds, *Thou shalt not diminish a word.* Some read, "Thou shalt not restrain," which is harsh. The verb, גרע, *garo*, properly means to be lessened and to be consumed. And Moses makes use of the same word in Deut. xii. 32, when he says, "Thou shalt not add, nor diminish," in reference to the Law, in which the people were to acquiesce, without corrupting it with any human devices. To diminish then was to take away something from the word.[1] But we ought to consider the reason why this was said to Jeremiah; it never entered the mind of the holy man to adulterate God's word; but God here encourages him to confidence, so that he might boldly execute his commands. To diminish then something from the word, was to soften what appeared sharp, or to suppress what might have offended, or to express indirectly or coldly what could not produce effect without being forcibly expressed. There is then no doubt but that God anticipates here this evil, under which even faithful teachers in a great measure labour; for when they find the ears of men tender and delicate, they dare not vehemently to reprove, threaten, and condemn their vices. This is the reason why God added this, *Diminish not a word;* as though he had said, "Declare thou with closed eyes and with boldness whatever thou hast heard from my mouth, and disregard whatever may tend to lessen thy courage."

We may now easily learn the use of this doctrine; the Prophet was not sent to profane men, who openly avowed their impiety, or lived in gross sins; but he was sent to the very worshippers of God, who highly regarded his external worship, and for this reason had left wives and children, came to the Temple and spared neither labour nor expense. As, then, he was sent to them, we must beware, lest we

[1] As it stands opposed to add, to subtract or take away would be the most suitable term. Such is the word used by the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and the *Syr.*; the *Targ.* is diminish, the word of our version.—*Ed.*

sleep in our vices and think that we have done our duty to God, when we have apparently given some evidences of piety; for except we really and sincerely obey God, all other things are esteemed of no value by him. It then follows—

3. If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them, because of the evil of their doings.	3. Si forte audiant et convertantur quisque a via sua mala, et pœniteat me mali quod ego cogitans ad faciendum (*id est*, cogito facere) ipsis propter (a facie, *ad verbum*) malitiam actionum ipsorum.

In this verse God briefly shews for what end he sent his Prophet. For it would not have been sufficient for him to announce what he taught, except it was known to have been the will of God. Here then God asserts that he would not be propitious to the people, except they complied with what he required, that is, to repent. Thus he testifies that what was taught would be useful to them, because it had reference to their safety; and a truth cannot be rendered more entitled to our love than when we know that it tends to promote our wellbeing. Therefore God, when he saw the people rushing headlong through blind despair into all kinds of impiety, designed to make the trial whether or not some of them were healable; as though he had said, "What are ye doing, ye miserable beings? It is not yet wholly over with you; only obey me, and the remedy for all your evils is ready at hand." We now see what God's design was, even that he wished to give those Jews the hope of mercy who were altogether irreclaimable, so that they might not reject what he taught on hearing that it would be for their good.

But we may hence gather a general doctrine; that when God is especially displeased with us, it is yet an evidence of his paternal kindness when he favours us with the prophetic teaching, for that will not be without its fruit, except it be through our own fault. But at the same time we are rendered more and more inexcusable, if we reject that medicine which would certainly give us life. Let us then understand that the Prophet says here, that he was sent that he might

try whether the Jews would repent; for God was ready to receive them into favour.

By saying אוּלַי, *auli*, "if peradventure," he made use of a common mode of speaking. God indeed has perfect knowledge of all events, nor had he any doubt respecting what would take place, when the prophets had discharged their duties; but what is pointed out here, and also condemned, is the obstinacy of the people; as though he had said, that it was indeed difficult to heal those who had grown putrid in their evils, yet he would try to do so. And thus God manifests his unspeakable goodness, that he does not wholly cast away men who are almost past remedy, and whose diseases seem to be unhealable. He also strengthens his Prophet; for he might from long experience have been led to think that all his labour would be in vain; therefore God adds this, that he might not cease to proceed in the course of his calling; for what seemed incredible might yet take place beyond his expectation. We now see why it was said, *If so be that they will hear.*

It is then added, *and turn*, &c. From the context we learn, that repentance as well as faith proceeds from the truth taught: for how is it that those alienated from God return, confess their sins, and change their character, minds, and purposes? It is the fruit of truth; not that truth in all cases is effectual, but he treats here of the elect: or were they all healable, yet God shews that the use and fruit of his truth is to turn men, as it is said also by the Prophet, (Mal. iv. 6,) and repeated in the first chapter of Luke, "He will turn many of the children of Israel." (Luke i. 6.) What follows is not without its weight, *every one from his evil way;* for God intimates that it was not enough that the whole people should ostensibly confess their sins, but that every one was required to examine himself: for when we seek God in a troop, and one follows another, it is often done with no right feeling. Repentance therefore is only true and genuine, when every one comes to search his own case; for its interior and hidden seat is in the heart. This is the reason why he says, *If a man*, that is, if every one *turns from his evil way.*

As to God's *repentance*, of which mention is made, there is no need of long explanation. No change belongs to God; but when God is said to turn away his wrath, it is to be understood in a sense suitable to the comprehension of men: in the same way also we are to understand the words, that he repents. (Psalm lxxxv. 5; cx. 4.) It is at the same time sufficiently evident what God means here, even that he is reconcilable, as soon as men truly turn to him: and thus we see that men cannot be called to repent, until God's mercy is presented to them. Hence also it follows, that these two things, repentance and faith, are connected together, and that it is absurd and an impious sacrilege to separate them; for God cannot be feared except the sinner perceives that he will be propitious to him: for as long as we are apprehensive of God's wrath, we dread his judgment; and thus we storm against him, and must necessarily be driven headlong into the lowest abyss. Hence under the Papacy they speak not only foolishly, but also coldly of repentance; for they leave souls doubtful and perplexed, nay, they take away every kind of certainty. Let us then understand the reason why the Holy Spirit teaches us, that repentance cannot be rightly and profitably taught, unless it be added, that God will be propitious to miserable men whenever they turn to him.

With regard to the word *I think*, I have already said, that God forms no contrary purposes; but this refers to those men who deserved his dreadful vengeance; it is the same as though he had said,—"Their iniquity has already ripened; I am therefore now ready to take vengeance on them: nevertheless let them return to me, and they shall find me to be a Father. There is, then, no reason for them to despair, though I have already manifested tokens of my vengeance." This is the meaning; but he repeats the reason of his wrath, *On account of the wickedness of their doings;* for we know that they were proud and obstinate; it was therefore necessary to close their mouths, otherwise they would have raised a clamour, and said, that God was unjustly angry, or that he exceeded all bounds. Whatever evils then were at hand, God briefly shews that they came

from themselves, that the cause was their own wickedness.[1] It follows,—

4. And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,

5. To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened;

6. Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

4. Dices ergo ad eos, Sic dicit Jehova, Si non audieritis me, ut ambuletis in lege mea, quam posui coram conspectu vestro,

5. Ad audiendum sermonem (*hoc est*, ut audiatis sermones) servorum meorum prophetarum, quos ego mitto ad vos, et mane surgendo et mittendo, neque tamen audistis (*hoc postremum lego parenthesin;*)

6. Et (*id est*, tunc) ponam domum hanc (*id est*, templum) sicuti Silo, et urbem hanc ponam maledictionem cunctis gentibus terræ.

The Prophet now briefly includes what he had been teaching, what he had been commanded to declare to the people. No doubt he spoke to them more at large; but he deemed it enough to shew in a few words what had been committed to him. And the sum of it was, that except the Jews so hearkened as to walk in God's Law, and were submissive to the prophets, final ruin was nigh the Temple and the city. This is the meaning: but it may be useful to consider every particular.

By these words, *Except ye hearken to me, to walk in my law*, God intimates, that he mainly requires obedience, and esteems nothing as much, according to what he says, that it is better than all sacrifices. (1 Sam. xv. 22.) This subject was largely treated in the seventh chapter, where he said, "Did I command your fathers when they came out of Egypt to offer sacrifices to me? this only I required, even to hear my voice." (Chapter vii. 22, 23.) We hence see, that the only way of living piously, justly, holily, and up-

[1] I render the verse as follows,—

3. It may be they will hear and turn every one from his way that is evil; then I will repent as to the evil which I purpose to bring on them for the evil of their doings.

Here is "evil for evil," the evil of punishment for the evil of sin. The word is often used in these two senses. It is changed in the *Sept.*, κάκων and πονήρων; and in the *Vulg.*, "malum" and "malitia." "Thus evil," says *Gataker*, "begetteth evil, a just retaliation of evil for evil. The evil of iniquity and the evil of penalty are as the needle and the thread; the one goeth before and maketh way for the other; and when one hath found a passage it draweth on the other."—*Ed.*

rightly, is to allow ourselves to be ruled by the Lord. This is one thing. Then what follows is worthy of being noticed, *To walk in my law.* God here testifies that his will is not ambiguous or doubtful, for he has prescribed what is right in his law. Were God then to descend a hundred times from heaven, he would bring nothing but this message, that he has spoken what is necessary to be known, and that his Law is the most perfect wisdom. Had he said only, "Hear me," men might have still evaded and avowed themselves ready to learn. God therefore does here silence hypocrites, and says that he required nothing else but to follow his Law. And for the same purpose he adds what follows, *which I have set before you:* for this kind of speaking intimates that the doctrine of the Law was by no means obscure or doubtful, as Moses said, "I this day call heaven and earth to witness, that I have set life and death before your eyes." (Deut. xxx. 19.) And in another place he said, "Say not, Who shall ascend above the clouds? or, Who shall descend into the abyss? or, Who shall pass beyond the sea? The word is in thy heart and in thy mouth," (Deut. xxx. 12-14; Rom. x. 6-8;) as though he had said, "God has deprived you of every excuse, for there is no reason for doubting, since he has spoken so familiarly to you, and has explained everything necessary to be known."

And hereby is confuted the impious blasphemy of the Papists, who impudently assert that not only the Law is obscure, but also the Gospel. And Paul also loudly declares, that the Gospel is not obscure except to those who perish, and who have a veil over their hearts, being visited with judicial blindness. But as to the Law, in which there is no such plainness as in the Gospel, we see what Jeremiah affirms here, that it was set before the eyes of all, that they might learn from it what pleased God, and what was just and right.

But what follows in the next verse ought to be especially observed; for these two things are necessarily connected, —that God required nothing but obedience to his Law,— and that his will was that his prophets should be heard,— *To hearken,* he says, *to the words of my servants, the prophets, whom I send to you,* (it is in the second person.) Here there

seems to be some inconsistency; for if God's Law was sufficient, why were the prophets to be heard? But these two things well agree together: the Law alone was to be attended to, and also the prophets, for they were its interpreters. For God sent not his prophets to correct the Law, to change anything in it, to add or to take away; as it was an unalterable decree, not to add to it nor to diminish from it. What then was the benefit of sending the prophets? even to make more manifest the Law, and to apply it to the circumstances of the people. As then the prophets devised no new doctrine, but were faithful interpreters of the Law, God joined, not without reason, these two things together,—that his Law was to be heard and also his prophets; for the majesty of the Law derogated nothing from the authority of the prophets; and as the prophets confirmed the Law, it could not have been that they took away anything from the Law.

Nay, this passage teaches us, that all those who repudiate the daily duty of learning, are profane men, and extinguish as far as they can the grace of the Spirit; many such fanatics among the Anabaptists have been in our time, who despised learning of every kind. They boasted that the doctrine of the Law was the Alphabet; and they also indulged in this dream, that wrong is done to the Holy Spirit when men attend to learning. And some dare, in a grosser manner, to vomit forth their blasphemies; they say that Scripture is enough for us, yea, even these two things, "Fear God and love thy neighbour." But as I have already said, we must consider how God has spoken by his Law; whether he has closed up the way, so as not to explain his will more clearly by the prophets, nor to apply to present use what would have otherwise been less effectual? or that he purposed to draw continually by various channels the doctrine which flows from that fountain? But now, since God had given his own Law, and had added to the Law his prophets, every one who rejected the prophets must surely ascribe no authority to the Law. Even so now, they who think it not their duty at this day to seek knowledge in the school of Christ, and to avail themselves of the hear-

ing of his word, no doubt despise God in their hearts, and set no value either on the Law, or on the prophets, or on the Gospel. Remarkable then is this passage; it shews that the Lord would have his Law to be our leader and teacher, and yet he adds his own prophets.

He says further, *Whom I have sent to you, rising early and sending.* Here he upbraids the Jews with their slowness and insensibility; for he roused them early, and that not once but often, and yet he spent his labour in vain. *Rising early*, when applied to God, means that he called these men in due time, as though he had said, that it was not his fault that the Jews had departed from the right way of safety, for he had been sedulously careful of their well-being, and had in due time warned them. We hence see how the Prophet condemned their tardiness and indifference, and then their hardness, by saying, *and sending;* for this intimates a repetition or assiduity. He had said before, "whom I sent to you, rising early;" now, when he says *and sending*, he means that he had not sent one prophet, or many at one time, but one after another continually, and that yet it had been without any benefit. The end of the verse I read in a parenthesis, (*but ye have not hearkened.*) Indeed what follows stands connected with the previous verses.[1]

Then will I make, &c.: the copulative is to be rendered here as an adverb of time. What had been just said, "but ye have not hearkened," was by way of anticipation; for the Jews, swelling with great arrogance, might have immediately said, "Oh! what new thing dost thou bring? *Except ye hearken to my voice, saith Jehovah, to walk in my Law, which I have set before you*, as though all this were not well known even to children among us; and yet thou pretendest to be

[1] It is better to commence the parenthesis after the word "prophets;" the three verses I render thus,—

4. And say to them, Thus saith Jehovah, If ye will not hear me, so as to
5. walk in my law, which I have set before you, by hearkening to the words of my servants the prophets, (whom I *have been* sending to you, even rising up early and sending; but ye did not hearken;)
6. then will I make this house like Shiloh, and this city will I make a curse to all the nations of the earth.

The *Vulg.* and the *Syr.* are in effect the same as above.—*Ed.*

the herald of some extraordinary prophecy; certainly such boasting will be deemed puerile by all wise men." Thus then they might have spoken, but the Prophet here briefly checks the insolence of such a foolish censure, *but ye have not hearkened;* as though he had said,-that he had not been sent in vain to speak of a thing as it were new and unusual, because the Jews had corrupted the whole Law, had become disobedient, untcachable, and unbelieving, and had despised both the Law of God and his Prophets.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased not only to make known thy will once by the Law, but also to add more light by thy holy prophets, and further to give us perfect light by thy Gospel, and as thou invitest us daily to learn by means of those whom thou hast sent,—O grant, that we may not be deaf nor tardy to hear, but promptly submit ourselves to thee, and so suffer ourselves to be ruled by thy word, that through our whole life we may testify that thou art indeed our God, we being thy people, until we shall at length be gathered into that celestial kingdom, which thine only-begotten Son our Lord has purchased for us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundredth.

We could not yesterday finish the words of the Prophet, as time did not allow us to do so. We said that the Prophet had denounced God's vengeance on the people in such a manner, that he softened that severity by some comfort, lest despair should have rendered more obstinate those whom he wished to turn into obedience; we said also, that the ministers of the word cannot otherwise speak rightly or profitably of repentance, except they connect with it the promise of God's mercy. But as the Prophet had to do with refractory men and despisers of God, it behoved him to declare what at length he subjoins, even that the destruction of the Temple and city was nigh at hand, except they repented.

And he says that *that house would become like Shilch,*

in order that by this example he might touch their hearts; for the ark of God had been long at Shiloh, and that place might have been deemed venerable for being ancient. Jerusalem was indeed renowned, but Shiloh was in time before it. This place was now forsaken; nay, it presented a sad and a degraded spectacle. He thus set before their eyes an example of God's vengeance, such as awaited them. We have seen the same reference in chap. vii. 12, where the Prophet says, "Go to Shiloh, where the ark of the covenant was," &c.; but he now speaks more briefly, for he no doubt repeated often the same things.

Then he adds, *I will make this city a curse*, or *execration, to all the nations of the earth.* It was still more intolerable to the Jews to hear what Jeremiah says here,—that so great a city, the sanctuary and the royal throne of God, would become a curse to heathen nations; and yet as God had commanded him to say this, he boldly performed his duty. Now follows the reward he met with,—

7. So the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord.

8. Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

7. Et audierunt sacerdotes et prophetæ et totus populus Jeremiam loquentem sermones hos in templo Jehovæ.

8. Et factum est, cum finisset Jeremias loqui quæcunque mandaverat Jehova, ut loqueretur toti populo, comprehenderunt ipsum sacerdotes et prophetæ et totus populus, dicendo, Morte morieris.

Here the Prophet recites what happened to him, after he had declared God's message, and faithfully warned the people by adding threatenings, as God had commanded him. He says first that he was *heard;* which is not to be deemed as commendatory, as though the priests and prophets patiently heard what he taught; for there was no teachable spirit in them, nor did they come prepared to learn, but they had long indulged themselves in perverseness, so that Jeremiah was become to them an avowed enemy; and they also audaciously opposed all his threatenings. But though they were not ashamed to reject what the Prophet said, they yet observed a certain form, as it is usual with hypocrites, for they are more exact than necessary, as they say, in what is formal,

but what is really important they neglect. We may hence observe, that the priests and prophets deserved no praise, because they restrained themselves, as though they deferred their judgment until the cause was known, but as the whole people were present, they for a time shewed themselves moderate; it was yet a feigned moderation, for their hearts were full of impiety and contempt of God, as it became really manifest.

But it must be observed that he says that the *priests* and *prophets hearkened.* As to the priests, it is no wonder that he calls them so, though they were in every way wicked, for it was an hereditary honour. But it is strange that he mentions the prophets. At the same time we must know, that Jeremiah thus calls those who boasted that they were sent from above. In the twenty-third chapter he at large reproves them; and in many other places he condemns their impudence in falsely assuming the authority of God. He then allowed them an honourable title, but esteemed it as nothing; as we may do at this day, who without harm may call by way of ridicule those prelates, bishops, or pastors, who under the Papacy seek to be deemed so, provided we at the same time strip them of their masks. But these lay hold on the title, and thus seek to suppress the truth of God, as though to be called a bishop were of more weight than if an angel was to come down from heaven. And yet were an angel to descend from heaven, he ought to be counted by us as a devil, if he brought forward such filthy and execrable blasphemies, as we see the world is at this day polluted with by these unprincipled men. This passage then, and the like, ought to be borne in mind, for they shew that titles are not sufficient, except those who bear them really shew that they are such as their calling imports. Thus, then, Jeremiah was called a Prophet, and also those impostors were called prophets whose only religion it was to corrupt and pervert the doctrine of the Law, but they were so called with regard to the people. It is in the meantime necessary, wisely to distinguish between prophets or teachers, as also the Apostle reminds us, we ought to inquire whether their spirit is from God or not. (1 John iv. 1.)

He says at last, that he was *condemned by the priests, and the prophets, and the whole people;* he at the same time introduced these words, that he had *spoken all that the Lord had commanded* him. Thus he briefly exposed the injustice of those by whom he was condemned; for they had no regard to what was right, as we shall presently see. But as they had brought with them a preconceived hatred, so they vomited out what they could no longer contain. It afterwards follows,—

9. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.

9. Quare prophetasti in nomine Jehovæ, dicendo, Tanquam Silo erit domus hæc, et urbs hæc perdetur, ut non sit habitator? (congregatus autem totus populus ad Jeremiam in templo Jehovæ.) (*Hoc per parenthesin legendum est, et refertur ad sequentem contextum, ut suo loco dicemus.*)

Here is added the cause of Jeremiah's condemnation, that he had dared to threaten with so much severity the holy city and the Temple. They did not inquire whether God had commanded this to be done, whether he had any just cause for doing so; but they took this principle as granted, that wrong was done to God when anything was alleged against the dignity of the Temple, and also that the city was sacred, and therefore nothing could be said against it without derogating from many and peculiar promises of God, since he had testified that it would be ever safe, because he dwelt in the midst of it. We hence see by what right, and under what pretence the priests and the prophets condemned Jeremiah.

And by saying, *in the name of Jehovah*, they no doubt accused him as a cheat, or a false pretender, because he had said that this had been commanded by God, for they considered such a thing impossible and preposterous. God had promised that Jerusalem would be his perpetual habitation; the words of Jeremiah were, "I will make this city like Shiloh." God seemed in appearance to be inconsistent with himself, "This is my rest for ever," "this shall be a desert." We hence see that the priests and the prophets were not without some specious pretext for condemning Jeremiah. There is therefore some weight in what they said, "Dost

thou not make God contrary to himself? for what thou denouncest in his name openly and directly conflicts with his promises; but God is ever consistent with himself; thou art therefore a cheat and a liar, and thus one of the false prophets, whom God suffers not in his Church." And yet what they boasted was wholly frivolous; for God had not promised that the Temple should be perpetual in order to give license to the people to indulge in all manner of wickedness. It was not then God's purpose to bind himself to ungodly men, that they might expose his name to open reproach. It is hence evident that the prophets and priests only dissembled, when they took as granted what ought to have been understood conditionally, that is, if they worshipped him in sincerity as he had commanded. For it was not right to separate two things which God had connected; he required piety and obedience from the people, and he also promised that he would be the guardian of the city, and that the Temple would be safe under his protection. But the Jews, having neither faith nor repentance, boasted of what had been said of the Temple, nay, they bragged, as we have seen elsewhere, and spoke false things; and hence the Prophet derided them by repeating three times, "The Temple of Jehovah, the Temple of Jehovah, the Temple of Jehovah," (ch. vii. 4;) as though he had said,—"This is your silly talk, you ever cry boastingly, 'The Temple of God;' but all this will avail you nothing."

It then follows, that *the people were assembled.* Here Jeremiah passes to another part of the narrative, for he reminded the princes and the king's councillors that they were not without reason roused to go up to the Temple.[1]

[1] It appears better to connect this sentence with the following verse, in this manner,—

10. While the whole people were assembled against Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah, then the princes of Judah heard these things, and went up from the king's house into the house of Jehovah, &c.

This seems to be the beginning of another section. The ו repeated ought often to be thus rendered, *while* or *when*, and *then*; and indeed in our language, *then* may be sometimes omitted. Were it here rendered *and* in both instances, the meaning would be the same, only the connection appears more evident when rendered as above; the report of the people congregated against Jeremiah reached the princes —*Ed.*

If the dispute had been between few, either Jeremiah would have been slain, or in some way intercepted, or it might have been that the princes would have circumvented the king and his councillors, and thus the holy man would have been privately crushed. But here he introduced these words, that the whole people were assembled against him. Hence it was that the report reached the king's court; and so the princes and councillors were commanded to come. In short, Jeremiah shews the reason why the princes came unto the Temple; it was because the city was everywhere in a commotion, when the report spread that something new and intolerable had been announced. The king therefore could not neglect this commotion; for it is a dangerous thing to allow a popular tumult to prevail. And therefore Jeremiah thus adds,—

10. When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the Lord, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's *house*.

10. Et audierunt principes Jehudah sermones hos, et ascenderunt e domo regis in domum Jehovæ (*hoc est, e palatio regis in Templum,*) et sederunt in foribus portæ Templi Jehovæ novæ.

We have said that the princes were roused by a popular clamour; nor is there a doubt but that the king had sent them to quell the commotion. It must be especially noticed, that they were engaged in other matters, as it was seldom the case that courtiers spent their time in hearing the prophets. It is indeed true, that the occupations of those are sacred, who have the care of the commonwealth, who dispense justice, and who have to provide for the public safety; but it behoves them so to divide their time, that they may be able to consecrate some portion of it to God. But courtiers think themselves exempted by a sort of privilege, when yet the truth is more necessary for them than even for the common people; for not only the duty of the head of a family lies on each of them, but the Lord has also set them over a whole people. If, then, private men have need of being daily taught, that they may faithfully rule and guide themselves and their families, what ought to be done by those rulers who are as it were the fathers of the com-

monwealth? But as I have already said, such men usually exempt themselves from the yoke of the faithful.

Hence then it was, that none of the princes were present, when Jeremiah had been commanded to proclaim his message, not only on the day when few came to the Temple, but when they came from all the cities of Judah to sacrifice at Jerusalem. It was, indeed, a very shameful sign of gross contempt, that no one of the king's counsellors appeared in the Temple, when there were present, from remote places, those whom religion and the desire to sacrifice had brought there. But he says that they came to know the cause of the commotion; for it is said, that they *sat at the new gate*, which some say was eastward; and they conjecture that it was called new, because it had been renewed; the king's palace was also towards the east, and the eastern gate was his tribunal. I am disposed to embrace this opinion, that they sat at the eastern gate.[1] It now follows,—

11. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes, and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

11. Et dixerunt sacerdotes et prophetæ principibus et toti populo, dicendo, judicium mortis est viro huic, quia prophetavit contra urbem hanc quemadmodum audistis auribus vestris.

We hence conclude, that the people in assenting to the sentence of the priests and prophets, had done nothing according to their own judgment, but that all of every rank through a violent feeling condemned Jeremiah. And as the priests and prophets directed also their discourse to the people, it appears clear, that they were guided by them, so that they thoughtlessly and inconsiderately gave their consent; for it often happens in a mob that the people exclaim, "Be it so, be it so; amen, amen." Jeremiah has indeed said, that he was condemned by the whole people; but it must be observed, that the people are like the sea, which of itself is calm and tranquil; but as soon as any wind arises,

[1] The present Hebrew text is, "the new gate of Jehovah." "House," before Jehovah, is found in many MSS., and is given by all the Versions, except the *Sept.*, where Jehovah as well as house, is left out. The true reading no doubt is, "the house of Jehovah." It was called "the new gate," says *Gataker*, because it had been renewed by Jotham. See 2 Kings xv. 35. It is rendered "the eastern gate" by the *Targ.* It was in the porch of this gate, according to some, that the great consistory sat.—*Ed.*

there is a great commotion, and waves dash one against another; so also it is with the people, who without being excited are quiet and peaceable; but a sedition is easily raised, when any one stirs up men who are thoughtless and changeable, and who, to retain the same simile, are fluid like water. This, then, is what Jeremiah now intimates.

But there is another thing to be noticed,—that the common people suffer themselves to be drawn in all directions; but they may also be easily restored, as it has been said, to a right mind. "When they see," says Virgil, "a man remarkable for piety and good works, they become silent and attend with listening ears." He there describes (Æneid, i.) a popular commotion, which he compares to a tempest; and he rightly speaks of a tempest; but he added this simile according to common usage. The same thing is now set before us by the Prophet; the priests and prophets, who thought that they alone could boast of their power and speak with authority, in a manner constrained the people apparently to consent. The king's counsellors being now present, the people became as it were mute; the priests perceived this, and we shall see by the issue that what the same poet mentions took place, "By his words he rules their hearts and softens their breasts." For it became easy for the king's counsellors even by a word to calm this foolish violence of the people. We shall indeed soon see, that they unhesitantly said, "There is no judgment of death against this man." It is hence evident how easily ignorant men may be made inconsistent with themselves; but this is to be ascribed to their inconstancy; and noticed also ought to be what I have said, that there was no real consent, because there was no judgment exercised. The authority of the priests overpowered them; and then they servilely confessed what they saw pleased their princes, like an ass, who nods with his ears.

Now, when the subject is duly considered, it appears, that the priests and the prophets alone spoke both to the princes and to the whole people, that Jeremiah was guilty of death,[1]

[1] The words literally are, "The judgment (or sentence) of death *is* to this man," or, *belongs* "to this man," that is, is deserved by him. They were now, it seems, before the court of justice, the princes sat as magis-

because he had prophesied against the city. We have said that they relied on those promises, which they absurdly applied for the purpose of confirming their own impiety, even that God had chosen that city that he might be there worshipped. It was a false principle, and whence proceeded their error? not from mere ignorance, but rather from presumption, for hypocrites are never deceived, except when they determine not to obey God, and as far as they can to reject his judgments. When, therefore, they are carried away by a perverse and wicked impulse, they ever find out some plausible pretext; but it is nothing but a disguise, as we clearly see from this narrative. It follows,—

12. Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes, and to all the people, saying, The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house, and against this city, all the words that ye have heard.

12. Et dixit Jeremias cunctis principibus et toti populo, dicendo, Jehova misit me ad prophetandum contra domum hanc et contra urbem hanc cunctos sermones quos audistis.

Jeremiah pleads only his own calling and the command of God; and thus he confutes the preposterous charge which they most impudently brought against him. There is no doubt but that he might have spoken at large, but he deemed it enough to include the substance of his defence. Had he made a long discourse, the main point might have been more obscure. He now clearly makes known the state of the question on both sides. The priests by their own authority condemned Jeremiah, because he reduced to nothing [as they thought] God's promises, for he had threatened destruction to the city and to the temple; but Jeremiah on the other side answers, that he had declared nothing but what God had enjoined. There was need of proof, when the priests held that God was inconsistent with himself in denouncing destruction on that city, which he had undertaken to defend and protect. But the confutation of this was ready at hand, —that God had never bound himself to hypocrites and ungodly men; nay, the whole glory of the city and the majesty of the Temple were dependent on his worship; nor is there any doubt but that Jeremiah had alleged these things. But

trates or judges; and this was the accusation brought by the priests and prophets; they had no power themselves of passing the sentence, they only declared him as worthy of death.—*Ed.*

as it was the main thing, he was satisfied with stating that he had been sent by God.

Thus he indirectly condemned their vain boastings,—that God was on their side; but he says, "I come not except by God's command." Now, though he declares briefly and distinctly that he had been sent by God, he yet presents himself as ready to prove everything; and as I have already said, there is no doubt but that he answered and discussed that frivolous question on which the priests so much insisted.

It is further worthy of being noticed, that he addressed both the princes and the people; and thus he intimated that the priests and the prophets were deaf, and not worthy of being spoken to; for it was their determination proudly to despise God, and to carry on war, as it were avowedly, with his servants; for he would have otherwise no doubt gladly endeavoured to restore them to the way of safety. But as he saw that they had closed the door against themselves, he passed them by. This is the reason why he says, that he spoke to the princes and to the people, having passed by those, on whom he must have spent labour in vain. And surely when they said that he was worthy of death, they proved by such a presumption that they would not be taught by him; and also their cruelty prevented them from being teachable. But the Prophet had regard to the very source of evil, because their object was obstinately to resist God and all his prophets.

By saying, that he was sent to *prophesy* all that they had *heard*, he made them judges, though he did not address them together with the princes; for we have seen that the latter were in the king's palace, and had been sent for when there was a fear of some commotion. But there is no doubt but that the address was repeated again. Jeremiah then made them judges and arbitrators, when he said that he retracted nothing, but that what they had heard, he had faithfully declared according to the command of God. It follows,—

13. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

13. Et nunc bonificate (bonas facite) vias vestras et studia vestra, et obtemperate voci Jehovæ Dei vestri, et pœnitebit Jehovam omnis mali quod pronunciavit contra vos.

He not only confirms here what he had taught, but also reproves the hardness and obstinate wickedness of the priests and prophets; for though he addressed the princes and the people, he yet no doubt designed to touch more sharply those ungodly men who set themselves up against God; and at the same time his discourse referred to them all, when he said, "How have I sinned? I have endeavoured to promote your safety, must I therefore die?" We hence see that the Prophet not only confirmed what he had said, but also accused his adversaries of ingratitude; for nothing could have been more kind, and ought to have been more acceptable, than to be called to repent, that they might receive mercy from God: "What was the object of my doctrine? even that ye might repent; and what does repentance bring? even salvation; for God is ready to forgive you. Now ye cannot bear to hear, that God would be merciful to you. What madness is this?" We now then see the design of the Prophet.

And this passage deserves to be noticed; for God will render to all the ungodly their own reward; not only because they harden themselves against every instruction, but also because they are manifest and, as it were, sworn enemies to their own salvation, inasmuch as they refuse the necessary remedy, and do not allow themselves to be restored to the right way, that they may be forgiven. Very weighty, then, is what he now says, that no fault could be found in his doctrine, except that it proved galling to the wicked, but that they could yet obtain peace, provided they sought reconciliation with God.[1]

He adds, *Hear ye the voice of Jehovah*, in order to shew that he required nothing new from the people, that he imposed on them no hard yoke, but only called them to the duty of obeying the Law; and he adds to this, *your God*, in order to take away from them every excuse, lest they should

[1] The words are.—

13. And now make good your ways and your doings, &c.; or, But now, &c. It reads better than "therefore," as in our version, borrowed from the *Vulg.* The *Sept.* is "and," and the *Targ.* also. "Amend" of our version, is the *Syr.*; "make good" is the rendering of the other early versions. He mentions what is posterior first; to hear God's voice is in order previous to the making good our ways; but this is according to the practice often adopted by the prophets.—*Ed.*

object and say that what Jeremiah alleged was unknown to them. Here, then, he triumphantly declares that he had taught them nothing that was alien to the Law, and that the Jews were inexcusable who professed Jehovah to be their God, and yet hearkened not to his voice, which ought to have been familiar to them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast not only called us once to the hope of an eternal inheritance, but invitest us continually to repentance, while we cease not by our continual sins to depart from thee,—O grant that we may not with deaf ears reject thy voice, but be pliable and submissive to thee, and that we may also so accustom ourselves to bear the yoke, that we may prove, through our whole life, that we are of thy sheep, and that Christ, thine only-begotten Son, whom thou hast set over us, is indeed our Shepherd, until we shall be gathered unto that kingdom which he has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and First.

14. As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you:

15. But know ye for certain, that, if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you, to speak all these words in your ears.

14. Et ego, ecce ego in manu vestro, facite mihi sicuti bonum, vel sicuti rectum erit in oculis vestris.

15. Veruntamen sciendo scite, quod si vos occideritis me, sanguinem purum (*vel*, innoxium) vos ponetis super vos et super urbem hanc, et super habitatores ejus; quia in veritate misit me Jehova ad vos, ut loquerer in auribus vestris cunctos istos sermones.

JEREMIAH, after having exhorted the princes, the priests, and the whole people to repent, and having shewn to them that there was a remedy for their evil, except by their obstinacy they provoked more and more the wrath of God, now speaks of himself, and warns them not to indulge their cruelty by following their determination to kill him; for they had brought in a sentence that he deserved to die. He then saw that their rage was so violent, that he almost despaired of his life; but he declares here that God would

be an avenger if they unjustly vented their rage against him. He yet shews that he was not so solicitous about his life as to neglect his duty, for he surrendered himself to their will; "Do what ye please," he says, "with me; yet see what ye do; for the Lord will not suffer innocent blood to be shed with impunity."

By saying that he was in their *hand*, he does not mean that he was not under the care of God. Christ also spoke thus when he exhorted his disciples not to fear those who could kill the body. (Matt. x. 28.) There is no doubt but that the hairs of our head are numbered before God; thus it cannot be that tyrants, however they may rage, can touch us, no, not with their little finger, except a permission be given them. It is, then, certain that our life can never be in the hand of men, for God is its faithful keeper; but Jeremiah said, after a human manner, that his life was in their hand; for God's providence is hidden from us, nor can we discover it but by the eyes of faith. When, therefore, enemies seem to rule so that there is no escape, the Scripture says, by way of concession, that we are in their hands, that is, as far as we perceive. We ought yet to understand that we are by no means so exposed to the will of the wicked that they can do what they please with us; for God restrains them by a hidden bridle, and rules their hands and their hearts. This truth ought ever to remain unalterable, that our life is under the custody and protection of God.

We now, then, see in what sense Jeremiah regarded his life as in the hand of his enemies, not that he thought himself cast away by God, but that he acknowledged that loosened reins were given to the wicked to rage against him. But we must at the same time bear in mind why he said this; after having conceded that his life was in their hand, he adds, *yet knowing know ye, that if ye kill me, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves.*[1] But he had said be-

[1] "And upon this city," &c., according to our version and all the early versions and that of *Calvin;* but the preposition is different, and might be rendered "against:" by killing him, they must have brought the guilt of innocent blood *on* themselves as perpetrators, and *against* the city and its inhabitants as having allowed and countenanced such a deed.—*Ed.*

fore that they might *do what seemed them good and right.*[1] Good and right here is not to be taken for a judgment formed according to the rule of justice, but for a sentence formed iniquitously according to their own will. This is a common mode of speaking in Hebrew. Jeremiah then testifies that he was not solicitous about his life, for he was prepared to offer himself, as it were, as a sacrifice, if the rage of his enemies should go so far. But in warning them to beware of God's vengeance, his object was not his own safety, but it was to stimulate them to repentance. He then plainly says that he did not fear death, for the Lord would presently shew himself to be his avenger, and that his blood also would be so precious in the sight of God, that the whole city, together with the people, would be punished, were they to deal unjustly with him.

But let us attend to what follows, even that God had *sent* him. He now takes this principle as granted, that it could not be that God would forsake his servants, to whom he has promised aid when oppressed by the ungodly. God, indeed, ever exhorts his ministers to patience, and he would have them to be prepared for death whenever there is need; yet he promises to bring them help in distress. Jeremiah then relied on this promise, and was thus persuaded that it could not be that God would forsake him; for he cannot disappoint his people, nor forfeit his faith pledged to them. As, then, he was fully persuaded of his own calling, and knew that God was the author of all his preaching, he boldly concluded that his blood could not be shed with impunity. All faithful teachers ought to encourage themselves, for the purpose of discharging strenuously the duties of their office, with this confidence,—that God who has committed to them their office can never forsake them, but will ever bring them help as far as it may be necessary. It now follows,—

16. Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests, and to

16. Et dixerunt principes et universus populus sacerdotibus et pro-

[1] "Meet," in our version, is not the correct word; the term signifies what is just and right. The *Sept.* renders the phrase very loosely, "as it is expedient and as it is best for you." The *Vulg.* is nearly the original, "what is good and right in your eyes;" literally it is, "as good and as right in your eyes."—*Ed.*

the prophets, This man *is* not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.

phetis, Non est viro huic judicium mortis; quia in nomine Jehovæ Dei nostri loquutus est nobis.

Jeremiah shews here that the sentence pronounced on him by the priests and false prophets was soon changed. They had indeed heard him, and had given some appearance of docility, as it is the case with hypocrites who for a time attend; but they exasperated themselves against God, and as their minds were previously malignant, they were rendered much worse by hearing. So it happened to the priests and false prophets, and in their blind rage they doomed the holy Prophet to death. He now says that he was acquitted by the princes and the king's counsellors, and also by the votes of the people. The people had, indeed, lately condemned him, but they had been carried away by the vain pomp and splendour of the priests and prophets; when they saw these so incensed against Jeremiah, they could not bring themselves to inquire into the cause. Thus the common people are always blinded by prejudices, so that they will not examine the matter itself. So it was when Jeremiah was condemned. We have said that the people were of themselves quiet and peaceable; but the prophets and priests were the fanners, and hence it was that the people immediately gave their consent. But in the presence of the princes they went in a contrary direction.

This passage, in short, teaches us how mischievous are rulers when there is no regard had for equity or justice; and it also teaches us how desirable it is to have honest and temperate rulers, who defend what is good and just, and aid the miserable and the oppressed. But we see that there is nothing steady or fixed in the common people; for they are carried here and there like the wind, which blows now from this quarter and then from that.

But we must notice this clause, that *Jeremiah was not worthy of death,*[1] *because he had spoken in the name of Jehovah.* They thus confessed, that whatever came from God ought to have been received, and that men were mad who

[1] The phrase literally is, "Not to this man the judgment of death." So nearly is the *Sept.* and the *Vulg.*, "There is not to this man the judgment of death." Our version is the *Syr.*—*Ed*

opposed the servants of God, for they hurried themselves headlong into their own destruction.

We may hence deduce a useful truth, that whatever God has commanded ought, without exception, to be reverently received, and that his name is worthy of such a regard, that we ought to attempt nothing against his servants and prophets. Now, to speak in the name of Jehovah is no other thing than faithfully to declare what God has commanded. The false prophets, indeed, assumed the name of God, but they did so falsely; but the people acknowledge here that Jeremiah was a true prophet, who did not presumptuously thrust in himself, nor falsely pretended God's name, but who in sincerity performed the duties of his office. It follows,—

17. Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

17. Et surrexerunt viri ex senioribus terræ, (ex senibus terræ,) ac dixerunt ad totum cœtum populi (*vel*, loquuti sunt dicendo; *est quidem semper verbum*, לאמר, loquuti sunt *ergo* ad totum cœtum) dicendo,

18. Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

18. Micha Morasthites fuit prophetans diebus Ezechiæ regis Jehudah, et dixit ad totum populum Jehudah, dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Sion ager (*sed subaudienda est particula similitudinis*, Sion ut ager) arabitur, et Jerusalem solitudines (*vel*, acervi) erit (*hoc est*, erit in solitudines, *vel*, in acervos, *vel*, in ruinas,) et mons domus (*id est* templi) in excelsa sylvæ.

19. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

19. An occidendo occidit eum Ezechias rex Jehudah, et totus Jehudah? an non timuit Jehovam? et deprecatus est faciem Jehovæ, et pœnituit Jehovam mali, quod loquutus fuerat contra eos: et nos facimus malum grande adversus animas nostras.

It is uncertain whether what is here recited was spoken before the acquittal of Jeremiah or not; for the Scripture does not always exactly preserve order in narrating things. It is yet probable, that while they were still deliberating and the minds of the people were not sufficiently pacified, the elders interposed, in order to calm the multitude and to soften their irritated minds, and to reconcile those to Jere-

miah who had previously become foolishly incensed against him; for no doubt the priests and the false prophets had endeavoured by every artifice to irritate the silly people against the Prophet; and hence more than one kind of remedy was necessary. When therefore the elders saw that wrath was still burning in the people, and that their minds were not disposed to shew kindness, they made use of this discourse. They took their argument from example,—that Jeremiah was not the first witness and herald of dreadful vengeance, for God had before that time, and in time past, been wont to speak by his other prophets against the city and the temple.

The priests and the prophets had indeed charged Jeremiah with novelty, and further pretended that they thus fiercely opposed him on the ground of common justice. Jeremiah had said, that God would spare neither the holy city nor the Temple. This was intolerable, for it had been said of the Temple, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell." (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) We hence see that Jeremiah was overwhelmed as it were by this one expression, while the priests and the false prophets objected and said, "Thou then makest void God's promises; thou regardest as nothing the sanctity of the Temple." And they further pretended that not one of the prophets had ever thus spoken. But what do the elders now answer? even that there had been other prophets who had denounced ruin on the city and the Temple, and that, therefore, the holy man was falsely charged with this disgrace, that he was the first to announce God's judgment. We now understand the state of the case: Jeremiah is defended, because he had not alone threatened the city and the Temple, nor was he the first, but he had others as the originators, from whose mouths he had spoken, who were also the acknowledged servants of God, from whom credit could not be withholden, such as Micah.

Now, what is here related is found in Micah iii. 12. The Prophet Micah had the same contest with the priests and prophets as Jeremiah had; for they said that it was impossible that God should pour his vengeance on the holy city and the Temple. They said, "Is not Jehovah in the midst of

us?" and they said also, "No evil shall come on us." They were inebriated with such a security, that they thought themselves beyond the reach of danger; and they disregarded all the threatenings of the prophets, because they imagined that God was bound to them. We indeed know that hypocrites ever relied on that promise, "Here will I dwell;" and they also took and borrowed words from God's mouth and perverted them like cheats: "God resides in the midst of us; therefore nothing adverse can happen to us." But the Prophet said, (the same are the words which we have just repeated,) "*For you Sion shall be plowed as a field,*[1] *and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of this house as the heights of a forest.*"

But let us now consider each clause. It is first said, that the *elders from the people of the land rose up.*[2] It is probable that they were called elders, not as in other places on account of their office, but of their age. It is indeed certain that they were men of authority; but yet I doubt not but that they were far advanced in years, as they were able to relate to the people what had happened many years before. As it is added, that they spoke to *the whole assembly of the people*, we may hence deduce what I have already stated,—that the people were so violent, that there was need of a calm discourse to mitigate their ardour; and certainly when once a commotion is raised and rages, it is not an easy matter immediately to allay it. When, therefore, the kind elders saw that the minds of the people were still exasperated, they employed a moderating language, and said, *Micah*[3] *the Morasthite* (they named his country) *prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah,* &c.

We ought to notice the time, for it might seem strange,

[1] Some render the phrase thus, "Sion, *being* a field, shall be plowed;" having become a field, it would be plowed. There is in this case no need of כ, *as*, to be placed before "field;" nor is there a different reading either here or in Micah, though it is supplied in the early versions, except the *Syr.*, which has, "Sion shall be reduced to a field."—*Ed.*

[2] The words literally are, "Then rose up men from the elders of the land."—*Ed.*

[3] The *Keri* reads מיכה, and is countenanced by several MSS., and is no doubt the true reading, and not מיכיה, as in the present received —*Ed.*

that when that holy king was anxiously engaged in promoting the true worship of God; things were in so disordered a state as to call for so severe a denunciation. If there ever was a king really and seriously devoted to the cause of religion, doubtless he was the first and chief exemplar; he spared no labour, he never seemed to shun any danger or trouble, whenever religion required this; but we find that however strenuously he laboured, he could not by his zeal and perseverance succeed in making the whole people to follow him as their leader. What then must happen, when those who ought to shew the right way to others are indifferent and slothful? In the meantime the good princes were confirmed by the example of Hezekiah, so that they did not faint or fail in their minds when they saw that success did not immediately follow his labours, nor any fruit. For it is a grievous trial, and what shakes even the most courageous, when they think that their efforts are vain, that their labours are useless, yea, that they spend their time to no purpose, and thus it happens that many retrograde. But this example of Hezekiah ought to be remembered by them, so that they may still go on, though no hope of a prosperous issue appears; for Hezekiah did not desist, though Satan in various ways put many hinderances in the way, and even apparently upset all his labours, so that they produced no fruit. So much as to the time that is mentioned.

The elders said, that Micah had spoken to the whole people, saying, *Thus saith Jehovah, Sion shall be plowed as a field.* We have already seen on what occasion it was that Micah spoke with so much severity; it was when hypocrites set up their false confidence and falsely assumed the name of God, as though they held him bound to themselves. *For you,* he said, *Sion shall be plowed as a field.* He began with the temple, and then he added, *and Jerusalem shall be in heaps,* or a solitude; and lastly, he said, *and the mountain of the house,* that is, of the temple, &c. He repeated what he had just said, for what else was the mountain of the temple but Sion? But as this prediction could have hardly been believed by the Jews, the Prophet, for the sake of confirmation, said the same thing twice. We hence conclude

that it was not a superfluous repetition, but that he might shake with terror the hypocrites, who had hardened themselves against God's threatenings, and thought themselves safe, though the whole world went to ruin.

Having now related what Micah had denounced, they added, *Slaying, did Hezekiah the king of Judah and all Judah slay him?* By the example of the pious King Hezekiah, they exhorted the people to shew kindness and docility, and shewed that it was an honour done both to God and to his prophets, not to be incensed against his reproofs and threatenings, however sharply they might have been goaded or however deeply they might have been wounded. But they further added, *Did he not fear Jehovah? and supplicate the face of Jehovah? and did not Jehovah repent?* They confirmed what Jeremiah had previously said, that there was no other remedy but to submit themselves calmly to prophetic instruction, and at the same time to flee to the mercy of God; for by the fear of God here is meant true conversion; what else is God's fear than that reverence by which we shew that we are submissive to his will, because he is a Father and a Sovereign? Whosoever, then, owns God as a Father and a Sovereign, cannot do otherwise than to submit from the heart to his good pleasure. Therefore the elders meant that Hezekiah and the whole people really turned to God. Now repentance, as it must be well known, contains two parts—the sinner becomes displeased with himself on account of his vices—and forsaking all the wicked lusts of the flesh, he desires to form his whole life and his actions according to the rule of God's righteousness.

But they added, that they *supplicated*, &c. Though Jeremiah uses the singular number, he yet includes both the people and the king; he seems however to have used the singular number designedly, in order to commend the king, whose piety was extraordinary and almost incomparable. There is no doubt but that he pointed out the right way to others, that they might repent, and also that he humbly deprecated that vengeance, which justly filled their minds with terror. He, indeed, ascribed this especially to the pious king; but the same concern is also to be extended to the

chief men and the whole body of the people, as we shall presently see; *did he not then supplicate the face of Jehovah?*

This second clause deserves special notice; for a sinner will never return to God except he has the hope of pardon and salvation, as we shall ever dread the presence of God, except the hope of reconciliation be offered to us. Hence the Scripture, whenever it speaks of repentance, at the same time adds faith. They are indeed things wholly distinct, and yet not contrary, and ought never to be separated, as some inconsiderately do. For repentance is a change of the whole life, and as it were a renovation; and faith teaches the guilty to flee to the mercy of God. But still we must observe that there is a difference between repentance and faith; and yet they so unite together, that he who tears the one from the other, entirely loses both. This is the order which the Prophet now follows in saying that Hezekiah *supplicated the face of Jehovah.* For whence is the desire to pray, except from faith? It is not then enough for one to feel hatred and displeasure as to his sins, and to desire to be conformed to God's will, except he thinks of reconciliation and pardon. The elders then pointed out the remedy, and shewed it as it were by the finger; for if the people after the example of Hezekiah and of others repented, then they were to flee to God's mercy, and to testify their faith by praying God to be propitious to them.

Hence it follows, that Jehovah *repented of the evil which he had spoken against them.* The Prophet now makes use of the plural number; we hence conclude that under the name of King Hezekiah alone he before included the whole people. God then *repented of the evil.*[1] As to this mode of speaking, I shall not now speak at large. We know that no change belongs to God; for whence comes repentance, except from this,—that many things happen unexpectedly which compel us to change our purpose? one had intended something; but he thought that that would be which never came to pass; it is therefore necessary for him to revoke what he had determined. Repentance then is the associate of igno-

[1] Both the *Sept.* and the *Syr.* and also the *Targ.* give the meaning, but not the proper word, "And the Lord abstained from the evils," &c.—*Ed.*

rance. Now, as nothing is hid from God, so it can never be that he repents. How so? because he has never determined anything but according to his certain foreknowledge, for all things are before his eyes. But this kind of speaking, that God repents, that is, does not execute what he has announced, refers to what appears to men. It is no wonder that God thus condescendingly speaks to us; but while this simplicity offends delicate and tender ears, we on the contrary wonder at God's indulgence in thus coming down to us, and speaking according to the comprehension of our weak capacities. We now perceive how God may be said to repent, even when he does not execute what he had denounced. His purpose in the meantime remains fixed, and as James says, "There is in him no shadow of turning." (James i. 17.)

But a question may again be raised, How did God then repent of the evil which he had threatened both to the king and to the people? even because he deferred his vengeance; for God did not abrogate his decree or his proclamation, but spared Hezekiah and the people then living. Then the deferring of God's vengeance is called his repentance; for Hezekiah did not experience what he had feared, inasmuch as he saw not the ruin of the city nor the sad and dreadful event which Micah had predicted.

Now this also is to be noticed,—that the pious king is here commended by the Holy Spirit, that he suffered himself to be severely reproved, though, as I have already said, he was not himself guilty. He had, indeed, a burning zeal, and was prepared to undergo any troubles in promoting the true worship of God; and yet he calmly and quietly bore with the Prophet, when he spoke of the destruction of the city and Temple, for he saw that he had need of such a helper. For, however wisely may pious princes exert themselves in promoting the glory of God, yet Satan resists them. Hence they ever desire, as a matter of no small importance, to have true and faithful teachers to help, to assist and to strengthen them, and also to oppose their adversaries; for if teachers are silent or dissemble, a greater ill-will is entertained towards good princes and magistrates; for when with the drawn sword they defend the glory of God and his worship,

while the teachers themselves are dumb dogs, all will cry out, "Oh! what does this severity mean? Our teachers spare our ears, but these do not spare even our blood." It is, therefore, ever a desirable thing for good and pious kings to have bold and earnest teachers, who cry aloud and confirm the efforts of their princes. Such was the feeling of pious Hezekiah, as we may conclude from this passage. The rest I must defer.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to gather us as a people to thyself, and to promise that we should be like a spiritual temple for thee to dwell in,—O grant that we may consecrate among us a perpetual habitation for thee, and so strive through the whole course of our life to devote ourselves to thee, that thy grace and blessing may never depart from us, but that we may experience more and more that those are never destitute of thy protection who truly and undissemblingly rely on thee, so that thy name may be more and more glorified in us through thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Second.

We saw yesterday the example which the elders had alleged to deliver Jeremiah from death,—that he was not the first who had threatened the city and the Temple with ruin, for Micah under the reign of Hezekiah had done the same and was not put to death. They hence concluded that it would be a heinous crime were they to slay Jeremiah, and that it would not remain unpunished. They then intimated that the people would commit a most grievous offence, if they killed Jeremiah; and they also added, that vengeance would follow, for the Lord would render them their due reward, if they thus cruelly treated the holy Prophet. It now follows,—

20. And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against this city, and against this land, according to all the words of Jeremiah:

20. Atque etiam vir fuit prophetans in nomine Jehovæ, Urias, filius Semeah ex Cariath-iarim, et prophetavit contra urbem hanc et contra terram hanc secundum sermones Jeremiæ:

21. And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;

22. And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *certain* men with him into Egypt:

23. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

21. Et audivit rex Joakim et omnes magnates ejus et Proceres sermones ejus, et quaesivit rex interficere ipsum, et audivit Urias et timuit, et fugit et transivit (*vel*, concessit) in Egyptum;

22. Et misit rex Joakim viros in Egyptum, Elnathan filium Achobor et viros cum eo in Egyptum.

23. Et eduxerunt Uriam ex Egypto, et adduxerunt eum ad regem Joakim, qui percussit eum gladio, et projecit cadaver ejus in sepulchra populi (*vel*, plebis *potius*.)

Another example is brought forward, partly different, and partly alike,—different as to the king, the like as to a Prophet. Uriah, mentioned here, faithfully discharged his office, but Jehoiakim could not bear his preaching, and therefore slew him. Some explain the whole in the same manner, as though the elders designed to shew that the wicked can gain nothing by resisting God's prophets, except that by contending they make themselves more and more guilty. But others think that this part was brought forward by the opposite party, and the words, "And also, [illegible], *ugam*, favour this opinion" for they may be taken adversatively, as though they said, "But there was another Prophet who did not speak of the ruin of the city and of the destruction of the Temple with impunity." And this opinion seems to be confirmed by what follows in the last verse of the chapter, [illegible] the hand of Ahikam [illegible] the particle [illegible] is a property nevertheless [illegible] [illegible] think [illegible] though [illegible] for him [illegible]

But [illegible] mitted [illegible] of Uriah [illegible] faithful [illegible] of [illegible]

But the time ought especially to be noticed. We have seen that this prophecy was committed to Jeremiah, and also promulgated at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign; but this beginning is not to be confined either to the first or second year; but as he became tributary to the king of Babylon, he afterwards endeavoured to throw off the yoke and was at length disgracefully dethroned; hence the beginning of his reign must be during the time that his power was entire. While then Jehoiakim retained his dignity, Jeremiah was bidden to proclaim this message. However this may have been, the King Jehoiakim thus enjoyed a tranquil reign; he was at Jerusalem. It is not therefore said here, that Uriah had threatened the city in his days; but the history is given as of a present thing. One thing then is evident, that this discourse was delivered, when King Jehoiakim was not afar off. His palace was nigh the Temple; his counsellors were present, who had come down, as we have seen, on account of the tumult. For the affair could not be hidden; since the priests and the false prophets everywhere inflamed the rage of the people. The king's counsellors therefore came to quell the disturbances. If this part of the address is to be ascribed to the defenders of Jeremiah, then they must have been endued with great courage and firmness, to allege against the king a nefarious murder, and also to condemn him for a sacrilege, for he had not only done an injury to a holy Prophet, but had directly opposed God himself. There are on both sides probable conjectures; for if we follow this opinion, that the servants of God, who favoured Jeremiah and sought to deliver him from danger, spoke these words, it might be objected and said, that no such thing is expressed But the narrative goes on continuously, *And there was also a man*, &c. Now when different persons speak and oppose one another, it is usual to mark the change. It seems then that the whole is to be read connectedly, so that they who first adduced the example of Micah, then added on the other hand, that Uriah indeed suffered punishment, but that thus a crime was added to a crime, so that Jehoiakim gained nothing by furiously persecuting God's Prophet. And that they did not speak of the consequences, ought not to appear

strange, for the condition of the city and of the people was known to all, and a more grievous danger was nigh at hand. Hence a simple narrative might well have been given by them; and as they did not dare to exasperate the mind of the king, it was the more necessary to leave that part untouched.

But if the other view be more approved,—that the enemies of Jeremiah did here rise against him, and alleged the case of Uriah, there is also some appearance of reason in its favour; the king was living, his counsellors were present, as we have said. It might then be, that those who wished the death of Jeremiah, referred to this recent example in order to have him destroyed,—"Why should he escape, since Uriah was lately put to death, for the cause is exactly the same? Uriah did not go any farther than Jeremiah; he seems indeed to have taken the words from his mouth. As, then, the king did slay him, why should Jeremiah be spared? Why should he escape the punishment the other underwent, when his crime is more grievous?" It hence appears that this view can without absurdity be defended, that is, that the enemies of Jeremiah endeavoured to aggravate his case by referring to the punishment the king inflicted on Uriah, whose case was not dissimilar; and I do not reject this view. If any approve of the other, that this part was spoken by the advocates of Jeremiah, I readily allow it; but I dare not yet reject wholly the idea, that Jeremiah was loaded with prejudice by having the case of Uriah brought forward, who was killed by the king for having prophesied against the city and the Temple.[1]

[1] There are two other views taken of this subject; some say that the second example, that of Uriah, was introduced by the writer of the narrative, whether Jeremiah himself or Baruch, and that this was mentioned to shew, that according to this precedent, Jeremiah would have been killed, had it not been for the interposition of Ahikam. This is the view taken by *Gataker* and *Blayney*.

But what appears most consistent with the whole passage is the view given by *Venema;* he considers that the 17th verse has been removed from its place between the 19th and the 20th, and that the "princes" mentioned the case of Micah in favour of Jeremiah, and that "the elders of the land" adduced the case of Uriah against him, and that notwithstanding this it is at last added, that Ahikam, one of the princes, succeeded in his deliverance. That chapters have been transposed in this book is indubitable; the same thing may also have happened as to verses.

Then the passage would read thus,—

Let us now consider the words; *There was also a man who prophesied in the name of Jehovah*, &c. If we receive the opinion of those who think that Jeremiah's enemies speak here, then *the name of Jehovah* is to be taken for a false pretence, as though they had said, "It is a very common thing to pretend the name of God; for every one who claims to himself the office of teaching, boasts that he is sent from above, and that what he speaks has been committed to him by God." Thus they indirectly condemned Jeremiah; for it was not enough for him to pretend God's name, as Uriah, of whom they spoke, had also professed most loudly that he was God's prophet, that he brought nothing as his own, and that he had a sure call. But if this part is to be ascribed to God's true worshippers, whose object it was to protect and defend Jeremiah, to speak in the name of Jehovah, as we said yesterday, was not only to glory on account of the prophetic office, but also to give evidence of faithfulness and of integrity, so as really and by the effect to prove that he was God's prophet, such as he wished to be thought.

They then added, he *prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.* If the adversaries of Jeremiah were the speakers, we see that he was so overpowered, that it was afterwards superfluous to know anything more of his cause; for another had already

16. Then said the princes and all the people to the priests and to the prophets, "Against this man there is no judgment of death, for in
18. the name of Jehovah hath he spoken to (or against) us. Micah the Morasthite was a prophet in the days of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Sion, *being* a field, shall be plowed, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house like the heights of
19. a forest.' Slaying, did Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and all Judah, slay him? did he not fear Jehovah and intreat the favour of Jehovah? then Jehovah repented as to the evil which he had pronounced against them; but we are doing a great evil against our own souls."
17. Then rose up men from the elders of the land and spoke to the
20. whole assembly of the people, saying, "But there was also a man, who prophesied in the name of Jehovah, Uriah, the son of Shemaiah," &c. &c.

This arrangment makes the whole narrative plain, regular, and consistent. The conclusion comes in naturally, that notwithstanding the adverse speech of the "elders" Jeremiah was saved by the influence of Ahikam, one of the princes.—*Ed.*

been condemned, whose case was in no way dissimilar or different; "He spoke *according to the words of Jeremiah*, and he was condemned, why then should we now hesitate respecting Jeremiah?" We see how malignantly they turned against Jeremiah this example, as though he was condemned beforehand in the person of another. But if these were the words of the godly, they are to be accounted for in another way; what is intimated is, that if Jeremiah was slain, God's vengeance would be provoked; for it was more than enough to shed the innocent blood of one Prophet.

It then follows, *And when Jehoiakim the king, and all his mighty men and the princes, heard his words*, &c. This verse seems to favour the opinion of those who conclude that godly men were the speakers; for they spoke dishonourably of the king and his counsellors; the king heard and his mighty men, (powerful men, literally,) and also all the princes; and *the king sought to slay him.* These words, however, may also be ascribed to the ungodly and the wicked, for they wished to terrify the common people by first mentioning the king and then the mighty men and the princes. And to seek to kill him, might also have been excused, even that the king could not bear such a reproach without revenging it; for he saw that the Prophet had taken such a liberty as not to spare the holy city nor the Temple: *The king* then *heard, and his mighty men and princes;* and then, *the king sought to slay him.*

But when Uriah heard it, he feared and fled. This passage teaches us that even the faithful servants of God, who strive honestly to fulfil their office, are yet not always so courageous as boldly to despise all dangers; for it is said that the Prophet *feared;* but he was not on this account condemned. This fear was not indeed blameless; but his fear was such, that he yet continued in his vocation. He might indeed have pleased the king, but he dreaded such perfidy more than death. He, therefore, so feared, that he turned not aside from the right course, nor denied the truth, nor admitted anything unworthy of his dignity or of the character he sustained. His fear then, though wrong, did not yet so possess the Prophet, but that he was ever faithful to God in

his vocation. It then follows, that he *went into Egypt.* We hence conclude, that the king's wrath and cruelty were so great, that the holy man could not find a corner to hide himself in through the whole land of Judea, nor even in other regions around. He was therefore forced to seek a hiding place in Egypt.

It is afterwards added that the king *sent men,* even *Elnathan,* the chief of the legation, with others.[1] There is no doubt but that Jehoiakim sent to the king of Egypt and complained that a turbulent man had fled, and that he asked him to deliver him up as a fugitive. So then he was brought back, not through power, but through a nefarious compact, for he was betrayed by the king of Egypt.

It is at length added, that they *led up Uriah from Egypt, and brought him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people,* by way of dishonour; for Jeremiah here calls them the graves of the common people, as we in French call shambles *des charniers.* The rich are honourably and splendidly buried at this day, and every one has his own grave; but when there is a vast number, the bodies are thrown together, for it would be too expensive to dig a grave for each. It seems also that there was such a practice in Judea, and that God's Prophet was buried in this ignominious manner.

[1] To avoid what may seem a tautology in this verse, *Blayney* renders the word for Egypt, adversaries,—"But Jehoiakim the king sent adversaries, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him, into Egypt." Were the words rendered literally, the repetition would not appear different from many that we meet with; "Then sent the king Jehoiakim men into Egypt with Elnathan the son of Achbor. even men with him into Egypt." The repetition seems to have been intended to shew that there was a strong force, and not one man, sent to take the Prophet, and that this force was to go even as far as Egypt. The version of the *Sept.* is, "And the king sent men into Egypt;" the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* are the same with our version; but the *Syr.* is, "And the king Jehoiakim sent a certain Egyptian, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and some with him, into Egypt."

It is singular that in one MS. the word מרגלים, *searchers, spies,* is found instead of מצרים, rendered often Egypt, though it comes from a root which means to bind close, to environ, to beset; and so as a hyphil participle it would be besetters, or catchers—in modern language, bumbailiffs, which is a corruption for bound bailiffs. This meaning would exactly suit the passage, "Then the king Jehoiakim sent men, catchers, with Elnathan the son of Achbor, even these men with him into Egypt."—*Ed.*

Thus they who spoke intimated that the king's wrath so burned, that he not only put him to death, but followed up his vengeance, so that a new disgrace awaited the Prophet, even when dead, for he was cast among the obscure and ignoble common people.

I have hitherto so explained this passage as to leave it doubtful whether the probability is that the speakers were Jeremiah's enemies or his advocates. And though, as I have declared twice or three times, I reject not the view which is different from that which I embrace, yet it seems most probable to me that the words were spoken by the godly men who defended the cause of Jeremiah. All the various reasons which lead me to this conclusion I will not here specify; for every one may himself see why I prefer this view. The common consent of almost all interpreters also influences me, from which I wish not to depart, except necessity compels me, or the thing itself makes it evident that they were mistaken. But we have seen from the beginning, that the two examples consecutively follow one another, and that nothing intervenes; it may hence be supposed, that the enemies of Jeremiah had previously performed their part. The words themselves then shew that those who commenced the discourse were those who carried it on. And that they did not mention the reason why they adduced this example is not to be wondered at; for the displeasure of the king was feared, and he had given no common proof, in his treatment of the holy Prophet, how impatiently he bore anything that trenched on his own dignity. They therefore cautiously related the matter, and left what they did not express to be collected by those who heard them. But it was easy from their words to know what they meant,—that God's vengeance was to be dreaded; for one Prophet had been slain; what if there was to be no end to cruelty? would not God at length arise to execute judgment when his servants were so unworthily treated? As, then, the words are not completed, it seems probable to me that God's true servants spoke thus reservedly and cautiously, because they dared not to express their thoughts openly.

Further, these words, *the king sought to slay him*, and *the*

king sent men, &c., are more suitable when considered as spoken by the defenders of Jeremiah than by the ungodly and the wicked; and they also named Elnathan, that they might hand down his name with infamy to future ages. And they lastly added that the Prophet *was brought up from Egypt*. What was very shameful seems certainly to be set here before us, that he was forcibly brought back from that land to which he had fled for an asylum, and also that he was brought to the king, that he smote him with the sword, that is, cruelly killed him; and further, that being not satisfied with this barbarous act, he caused him to be ignominiously buried. All these particulars, as I have said, seem to shew that these words may be more suitably applied to the holy men who defended the cause of Jeremiah than to his enemies. It now follows,—

24. Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

24. Veruntamen manus Achicam, filii Saphan, fuit cum Jeremia, ne traderetur ipse (*vel*, ne traderent ipsum) in manum populi ad interficiendum ipsum.

There is here an adversative particle, and not without reason; for the contention is pointed out which had so raged that it became difficult to extricate the holy Prophet from danger. We hence conclude that Jeremiah was in so much peril that it was with great and arduous effort that Ahikam saved him. There is a frequent mention of this man in sacred history, and his name will hereafter be found in several places, and he was left to govern the remnant of the people after the demolition of the city. (2 Kings xxv. 22; Jer. xxxix. 14.)[1] And there is no doubt but that he made progress in religion and was an upright man, and that his virtues were so valued by Nebuchadnezzar that he bestowed on him such an honour. He was soon afterwards slain by the ungodly and the wicked; but there is nothing related of him but what is honourable to him. It was indeed an extraordinary act of courage that he dared to oppose the fury of the whole people, and to check the priests and the false prophets who had conspired to put the holy man to death.

[1] This was his son Gedaliah, and not himself.—*Ed.*

This is the reason why it is in the last place added, that *the hand of Ahikam was with Jeremiah;* though the people were furious, and the priests would by no means be restrained from persecuting the holy man, yet Ahikam could not be turned from his holy purpose, but persevered to defend a good cause until Jeremiah escaped in safety. It is hence said, that his *hand was with Jeremiah;* for by hand in Scripture is meant effort, (*conatus;*) for where there is anything to be done, or any difficulty, the Scripture uses the word *hand.* But as Ahikam exerted himself to the uttermost, not only in aiding the holy Prophet by his words, but also in repressing the fury of the people, and in boldly resisting the priests and the false prophets, the *hand* in this place means aid; his *hand was with Jeremiah,* that is, he aided or helped him, so that he was *not delivered up into the hand of the people.*

It hence also appears, as we said yesterday, that the tumult of the people was not immediately allayed, for the false prophets and the priests had so roused their virulence that they became almost implacable. Here, then, is set before us an example of courage and perseverance; for it is not enough for us to defend a good cause when we may do so with safety, except we also disregard all ill-will and despise all dangers, and resist the fury of the wicked, and undergo contentions and dangers for God's servants whenever necessary. We are also taught at the same time how much weight belongs to the influence of one man when he boldly defends a good cause and yields not to the madness of the wicked, but risks extremities rather than betray the truth of God and his ministers. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

2. Thus saith the Lord to me, Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,

1. Principio regni Jehoiakim filii Josiæ regis Jehudah fuit sermo hic ad Jeremiam a Jehova, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova ad me (mihi,) Fac tibi vincula et juga, et pone ea super collum tuum;

3. And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah;

4. And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Thus shall ye say unto your masters;

5. I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the ground, by my great power, and by my out-stretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

3. Et mitte ad regem Edom, et ad regem Moab, et ad regem filiorum Ammon, et ad regem Tyri, et ad regem Sidonis, per manum nuntiorum, qui venient Jerusalem ad Zedechiam regem Jehudah;

4. Et mandata dabis illis ad dominos suos, dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Sic dicetis ad dominos vestros,

5. Ego feci terram, hominem et jumentum quod super faciem terræ est, in virtute mea magna, et brachio meo extento; et dedi eam illi qui placeret in oculis meis.

Jeremiah prefaces this prediction by saying, that it was delivered to him at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. But this beginning, as we have said, extended to the whole of his reign while it was prosperous and entire. While, then, Jehoiakim enjoyed a quiet possession of the kingdom, Jeremiah was bidden to make known what had been committed to him, not to Jehoiakim himself, but, as we learn from the third verse, to Zedekiah who had not immediately succeeded him, but became at last king after various changes. God, then, committed this prophecy to his servant, but did not design it to be immediately promulgated. If it be asked, why God designed what he purposed to be made known to be concealed for so long a time? the answer is this,—that it was done for the sake of the Prophet himself, in order that he might with more alacrity perform his office, knowing of a certainty that no one thought that it could ever happen, and certainly the thing was incredible.[1]

[1] The manner in which *Calvin* accounts for this prophecy being so long kept hid is ingenious; but modern authors are not satisfied. *Lightfoot* says, that Jeremiah was ordered to make these yokes in Jehoiakim's time to signify the subjection of Judah to the king of Babylon, but that he was ordered to send them to foreign kings in the reign of Zedekiah. The first verse is omitted in the *Sept.*; the *Greek* version, as given by *Theodoret*, has "Jehoiakim," and so the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.*; but the *Syr.* and *Arab.* have "Zedekiah;" and there are *three* Hebrew MSS. in which the same is found. What seems most decisive is the beginning of the next chapter, where Hananiah comes forward in "the fourth year" of Zedekiah and breaks the yoke of Jeremiah. *Gataker*, *Henry*, *Lowth*, *Scott*, and *Blayney*, are all inclined to think that the mistake originally was that of the scribe.—*Ed.*

God's design then was to communicate this to his Prophet himself, that he might see afar off what no one, as I have just said, had thought could ever come to pass. This is the reason, as I think, why this prophecy was not immediately published, but was like a treasure deposited in the Prophet's bosom, until the ripened time came. I shall defer till to-morrow the explanation of this prophecy.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that when at any time thou grievously threatenest us, we may not, on that account, become angry, but learn to acknowledge our sins, and truly to humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, and also to deprecate thy wrath, and to prove by true repentance, that we profit by thy word, and believe thy denunciations, so that we may become partakers of that mercy, through which thou promisest to be propitious to all who turn to thee: and may we thus advance more and more, and persevere in the right course of repentance, until having at length put off all the vices of the flesh, we shall attain to a perfection of righteousness and the fruition of that glory which has been laid up for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Third.

We explained yesterday why this command was given to Jeremiah at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, which was not yet to be executed until the time of Zedekiah: it was God's design to strengthen him in the meantime, lest he should faint in his course. Let us now see what was the object of this prophecy and what is its meaning.

The Prophet seems to have addressed the ambassadors who were sent by neighbouring kings to King Zedekiah; and he was bidden to command them to declare each to his master, that they were all to come under the yoke of the king of Babylon. There is, moreover, no doubt but that God designed especially and chiefly to give a lesson to Zedekiah and to the Jews; for these legations mentioned here might have so emboldened them as to despise all prophecies, and to think themselves beyond all danger. For the purpose for

which these legations were sent by the king of Sidon, by the king of Tyrus, by the king of Moab and Ammon, ought to be particularly observed: when they saw that the king of Babylon would not spare them, they began to join their forces. Every one at first consulted his own advantage, and saw no need of mutual help; and so it was that the Chaldeans easily overcame them while they were disunited. Experience at length taught them, that neither the king of Judah nor any of the neighbouring kings could sustain the contest unless they formed a confederacy. Thus, then, it happened that the king of Tyrus, the king of Sidon, the king of Moab, and the king of Ammon, offered their forces and their money to the king of Judah, and that he also promised to help them in return, if the Chaldean attacked them. It was therefore a new occasion for confidence to the Jews, so that they gathered courage, and thus were emboldened to resist, relying on so many neighbouring kings.

The Chaldeans had been hitherto successful, for they had assailed each by himself; but when all of them were ready by their united forces to oppose and restrain their attacks, it was hardly credible that they could be conquered. It was therefore God's purpose to remove this false confidence, and to warn Zedekiah and the whole people, lest they should be deceived by such allurements, but that they might know that they were patiently to endure the punishment inflicted on them by God. This therefore was the reason why the Prophet was sent to the ambassadors who had come to Jerusalem. He was not set a teacher over them; but this was done with reference to Zedekiah and the people. It is yet probable that these commands were set forth before the king, that the king might know that he had been wholly deceived, and that he still foolishly trusted to the subsidies which had been offered.

We may easily imagine how grievous it must have been to the king and to the people to hear this prophecy. The ambassadors were in a manner dishonoured; the kings, by whom they had been sent, might have complained that they were treated with great indignity. Hence the king and the people must have been very incensed against Jeremiah.

But the Prophet boldly performed what God commanded him, as it behoved him. And we shall hereafter see, that his words were addressed to King Zedekiah rather than to these heathens.

We now understand the reason why God would have his Prophet to give these commands to the ambassadors, who had been sent by heathen kings to King Zedekiah: it was that the king might know that it was wholly useless for these kings to promise their assistance; for he had to do, not with the Chaldean king, but rather with the judgment of God, which is irresistible, and which men in vain struggle with.

Though the Prophet was bidden to command the ambassadors to say to the kings by whom they had been sent, *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts*,[1] they yet might have refused to do so, and that with indignation: "What! Are we come here to be ambassadors to thee? and who indeed art thou who commandest us? besides, dost thou think that we are so mad as to threaten for thy sake, our kings and masters, and to declare to them what thou biddest, that they are shortly to become the servants of the Chaldean king?" The ambassadors then might have thus treated the holy Prophet with derision and laughter: but, as we have said, the whole was done for the sake of Zedekiah and the people, in order that the Prophet might dissipate that vain splendour and pomp, by which he saw that Zedekiah and all the Jews were deceived; for they thought that they had as it were high and large mountains to be set in opposition to the Chaldean king and his army: "On what part can they assail us, since the king of Tyrus is on our side, and also the king of Sidon, the king of Moab, and the king of Ammon? these rule widely, and their cities are impregnable." Thus, then, the Jews were convinced that they would be exempt from every trouble and molestation; but in order that they might not deceive themselves with that vain display, Jeremiah said, "Declare, ye ambassadors, to your masters what God has spoken, even that ye must submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon."

[1] The fourth verse in our version is not correct, "And command them to say to their masters," it ought to be, "And command them as to their masters (or lords,) saying,"—; for the Hebrew will not admit of such a transposition.—*Ed.*

And a visible symbol was added in order to confirm the prediction: the Prophet was bidden to put a yoke on his neck, or yokes, for he speaks in the plural number. מוֹט, *muth*, means a pole, a yoke, a transverse piece of wood: and no doubt he applied some pieces of wood to his neck, like the yoke laid on oxen; and then he tied this yoke or cross-bar; for יסר, *isar*, means to bind or tie, and so מוסרות, *musarut*, are bands; מוסר, *musar*, also means sometimes a girdle; but here it is to be taken for bands or ligaments. It was a sad spectacle to see on the neck of Jeremiah, when he went forth, the symbol of the bondage of all kings and nations: he was as it were in the place of all a captive before the time: but when God laid a yoke on the Jews and on all other nations, Jeremiah was then a free man; for though he bore this mark of bondage, he yet expected God's judgment with a resigned mind, while others disregarded it. But this confirmation rendered them more inexcusable, as the case is, when God, to strengthen faith, adds sacraments or other helps to his word, by which means he impresses us the more, for he thus teaches not only our ears, but also our eyes and all our senses: when God thus omits nothing that may tend to strengthen our faith in his word, a heavier condemnation awaits us, if such signs avail not.

We then perceive the reason why the Prophet applied to his neck the symbol of future bondage: were there any teachable among the people, to see such a sign with their eyes must have been useful to them. But as the greater part had hardened themselves in their obstinacy, what ought to have done them good, by humbling them in time before God, so as to anticipate his judgment, had no other effect but to render their punishment more grievous.

Then follow these words, *I have made the earth, the man and the beast, which are on the face of the earth, by my great power, and by mine extended arm.*[1] The spectacle would have been

[1] Whenever the pronouns are set down in Hebrew, they are emphatic: the beginning of this verse ought to be rendered, "I myself," or "made have I, even I, the earth, the man also and the beast that are on the face of the earth," (not as in our version, "upon the ground,") &c. The last clause, "and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me," according to *Calvin* and our version, ought rather to be, "and I will give it to whom it shall seem right in my eyes." So *Venema* and *Blayney*; and it

unmeaning and to no purpose, had Jeremiah only put the yoke on his neck, and added no instruction; for we know that all signs are as it were dead, except life is given them by the word. As then an image avails not much, so whatever signs may be set before our eyes, they would be frivolous and without meaning, were no doctrine added as the life. And hence also is condemned the madness of the Papists, who amuse the minds of the people with many signs, while no doctrine is conveyed. It therefore follows that they are mere figments, and attended with no profit. God, then, has ever added to signs his doctrine, which may therefore be truly compared to the soul, which gives life to the body, that would otherwise be without motion or strength. On this account Jeremiah shews what the yoke meant. He also speaks of the power and sovereign authority of God; for kings, though they confess that God holds the government of the world, cannot yet entertain the idea that they can be in a moment overwhelmed and cast down from their dignity. For they seem to themselves to be fixed in their nests, and so they promise to themselves a permanent condition, and imagine that they are not subject to the common lot of mortals.

As, then, kings are so inflated with pride, the Lord used this preface, that he *made the earth* and all living beings. He speaks not of heaven, but mentions only that he made the earth, *and man, and the animals which are on the face of the earth;* and adds, *by my great power and extended arm.* Why was this said, except that men might be awakened on hearing that the earth continues not as it is, but as it is sustained by God's power by which it was once created? The same power preserves men and animals; for nothing can remain safe except God exercises from heaven his hidden power. This, then, was the reason why these words were introduced. God set his own arm and power in opposition

is according to the *Sept.*, though the other versions are the same with our own. The verb indeed is in the past tense, but it is preceded by ו conversive. Then follows the next verse, "And now I—given have I all these lands," &c. The fifth verse contains a general declaration of truth; God made the earth, and would give it to whom he pleased: the sixth includes his determination as to all these lands; he had given them to Nebuchadnezzar.—*Ed.*

to the pride of those who thought that they stood by their own power, and did not acknowledge that they were dependent on the nod of God alone, who sustained them as long as he pleased, and then overthrew and reduced them to nothing when it seemed good to him.

This doctrine, then, ought to be applied to ourselves: for Jeremiah did not speak generally and indiscriminately of God's power, but accommodated to the subject in hand what he said of God's power, that men might know that there is nothing fixed or permanent in this world, but that God preserves men and animals, and yet in such a way, that at any moment he can by a single breath reduce to nothing all those who exist and all that they have. It follows—

6. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

7. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and *then* many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

6. Et nunc ego dedi omnes terras istas in manum Nebuchadnezer regis Babylonis servi mei, atque etiam bestiam agri (*hoc est*, bestias agrestes) dedi illi ad serviendum ei:

7. Et servient ei omnes gentes et filio ejus, et filio filii ejus usque dum venerit tempus terræ ejus, atque etiam ipsius; et servient ei gentes multæ (*vel*, magnæ) et reges magni.

God, after having claimed to himself the government of the whole earth, and shewn that it is in his power to transfer kingdoms to whom he pleases, now declares his decree—that he would subject to the king of Babylon all the neighbouring lands, even Tyrus and Sidon, the country of Moab, the country of Ammon, the country of Edom, and even Judea itself. If Jeremiah had begun by saying, that God had given to King Nebuchadnezzar these lands, the prediction would not have been so easily received, for pride would have been as it were an obstacle to bolt up their minds and hearts. But the preface, as it has been stated, served to shew that they were not to think that they could stand against the will of God. After having then brought down the great height which seemed fixed in their hearts, he now declares that King Nebuchadnezzar would be the lord over Judah as well as over all the countries around, for God had set him over these lands.

He extends also this subjection, of which he speaks, over

the very beasts, and not without reason; for he thus indirectly condemns the hardness of men, if they resisted, as though he had said, "What will it avail you to attempt with refractory hearts to shake off the yoke? for the very beasts, tigers, wolves, lions, and every fierce and savage animal in the land, even all these beasts shall know that the King Nebuchadnezzar is their master, even by a hidden instinct. Since, then, these beasts shall obey King Nebuchadnezzar, because he has been raised by God to that dignity, how great must be the stupidity of men in not acknowledging what the very beasts understand?" We hence see the design of mentioning the beasts; the Prophet upbraided men with their madness, if they ferociously resisted the King Nebuchadnezzar; for in that case the beasts of the field were endued with more intelligence than they. For whence is it that beasts have fear, except that God has imprinted certain marks of dignity on kings, according to what is said by Daniel. (Daniel ii. 38.) As, then, the majesty of God appears in kings, the very beasts, though void of reason and judgment, yet willingly obey through a hidden impulse of nature. Hence inexcusable is the pride of men, if at least they do not imitate the example of the very beasts.[1]

Nebuchadnezzar is afterwards called *the servant* of God, not that he was worthy of such an honour, as it had never been his purpose to labour for God; but he was called a servant, because God designed to employ him in his service, as those are called in the Psalms the sons of God, to whom the word of God was addressed, that is, to whom he gave authority to rule. (Psalm lxxxii. 6; John x. 35.) So also Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant, because he was divinely endued with sovereign power. This he did not know, nor was this said for his sake, nor was he honoured with such a name, as though God regarded him as one of his own people; but this had a reference to the Jews and to all the other

[1] Some give this view as to the beasts of the field, that not only towns and cultivated lands would be given up to Nebuchadnezzar, but also hills and mountains, deserts and forests, which were inhabited by wild beasts, and that this was said in order to shew that a *complete* possession of their lands, and of all things within them, would be given to that king, not excepting the wild beasts.—*Ed.*

nations, in order that they might be fully persuaded that they were obeying God in humbling themselves and in undertaking the yoke of the king of Babylon, for this pleased God. There is no power, says Paul, but from God, (Rom. xiii. 1,) and that sentence is derived from this principle, that all power is from God; for he gives the power to rule and to govern to whom he pleases. Whosoever, then, are endued with the power of the sword and public authority, are God's servants, though they exercise tyranny and be robbers. They are servants, not with respect to themselves, but because God would have them to be acknowledged as his ministers until their time shall come, according to what follows—

Serve him shall all nations, and his son, and the son of his son. The greater part think that Nebuchadnezzar had only two successors of his own posterity, Evil-merodach and Belshazar; others name five, and two of them between Evil-merodach and Belshazar. Those who think that there were no more than three, quote this testimony of the Prophet, for he names only the king's son and his grandson; but this would be no sufficient reason. I am, however, disposed to follow what has been more commonly received, that Belshazar, the last king of Babylon, who was slain by Cyrus, was the third from Nebuchadnezzar.[1]

But this is not the main thing; for the Prophet speaks of the time of the Chaldean monarchy as well as of the king, *until the time of his land shall come.* The time of the land was that determined by heaven; for as to every one of us there is a limit fixed beyond which no one can pass, so we ought to judge of kingdoms. As, then, the life of every individual has its fixed limits, so God has determined with regard to the empires of the whole earth; thus the life and death of every kingdom and nation are in the hand and at the will of God. For this reason it is now said, that the *time* of Chaldea would *come*, and then it is added, *and of the king himself.*[2] This ought not to be confined to Nebuchad-

[1] It seems that there were two besides, who exercised for a time regal power, but they were not the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar.—*Ed.*

[2] This is rendered differently, "until the time of his land, even his, shall come." So the early versions, and so *Venema* and *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

nezzar himself; but as his grandson represented him, the time, though not strictly, may yet be aptly said to have been that, when God had put an end to him and to his power when Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians. This was, however, at the same time for the comfort of the godly; for it was not God's design to leave the faithful without some alleviation in their trouble, lest grief should overpower them; when they found themselves oppressed by the Chaldeans, and in a manner overwhelmed, doubtless despair might have crept in, and hence murmurings and blasphemies might have followed. It was, therefore, God's purpose to mitigate in some measure their bitterness when he added, that the *time* of Nebuchadnezzar himself *would come*, that is, the time in which he was to perish. When, therefore, the faithful saw him taking possession of all lands, and dreaded by all nations, they were not to despond, but rather to extend their thoughts to that time of which Jeremiah had predicted, that they might receive some alleviation to their grief, and be enabled to bear with more resignation the cross laid on them. In this expression, then, is included a promise; for the hope of deliverance was set before them, when they understood that reverses would soon happen to King Nebuchadnezzar.

He afterwards adds, *serve him shall great*, or many *nations* (for the word רבים, *rebim*, means both) *and great kings*.[1] This was distinctly expressed, that no conspiracy might deceive the Jews and other nations; for they thought that when united together they could offer an effectual resistance: "Accumulate your forces and your efforts," says God; "yet all these shall be dissipated; for my decree is, that great kings and many nations shall serve the Chaldeans." It follows—

8. And it shall come to pass, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve

8. Erit autem ut gens et regnum, quæ non servierint ei,

[1] Here *Calvin* has followed the *Vulg.*; but our version gives the true meaning. See note on chap. xxv. 14. The two clauses may be thus translated, "Until the time of his land, even his, shall come; then reduce him (or it, that is, land) to subjection, shall many nations and mighty kings." Such substantially is the version of *Venema* and of *Blayney*, and also of *Piscator* and *Junius*.—*Ed.*

the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

nempe **Nebuchadnezer regi Babylonis, et qui non posuerit collum suum sub jugo regis Babylonis, gladio et fame et peste visitabo super gentem illam, dicit Jehova, donec interfecero ipsos in manu ejus.**

After having promulgated his decree by the mouth of Jeremiah, God now adds a threatening, in order that the Jews as well as others might willingly, and with resigned and humble minds, undertake the yoke laid on them. The Prophet, indeed, as we have said, had the Jews more especially in view; but he extended, as it were by accident, his prediction to aliens. We hence see why this denunciation of punishment was added. It ought, indeed, to have been enough to say, that Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant to subdue Judea; but as it was a hard thing for the Jews to receive that enemy, nor could they be induced to submit to him, it became necessary to add this threatening, "See what ye do, for ye cannot be stronger than God." This threatening is indeed included in the former verse; but we know how tardy men are to learn, especially when any false impression has preoccupied their minds. As, then, the Jews refused the authority of Nebuchadnezzar, though the Prophet had testified to them that he was God's servant, they would not have hesitated still to evade and to be refractory, had not their hardness and obduracy been broken by this commination.

And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom, which will not serve him, even *Nebuchadnezzar, and not put their neck under his yoke,* it shall be, *that I shall visit that nation,* &c. God speaks without distinction of all nations; but the Jews ought to have reasoned from the less to the greater; for if God would so severely punish the pride of the Gentiles, in case they withdrew themselves from under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, how much heavier and more dreadful vengeance ought the Jews to have dreaded, who had been warned by the Prophet, and who doubtless knew that this happened not to them by chance, but that it was God's righteous judgment, by which their sins were punished? Were they obstinately to attempt to shake off the yoke from their neck,

would not this have been to fight against God? We now, then, perceive that the Prophet spoke thus indiscriminately of all nations, that he might sharply rebuke the Jews; and he shewed that their ferocity would be inexcusable were they not willingly to humble themselves.

By mentioning twice, *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon*, he seems to imply something important; for they might have objected and said, "What have we to do with a king so distant? and by what right does he now invade our countries? why is he not content with his own burdens? why does he not abide in his own city and in his own land?" And the name of Babylon was at the same time hateful, for they had carried on war with many nations, and reduced the Assyrians under their yoke, who were neighbours to the Jews, and the Assyrians were also in a manner connected with them; and their name was no doubt abhorred by the Jews, on account of the wars perpetually carried on by them. Hence God meets here these objections, and shews that however odious Babylon might be to the Jews, and that however remote Nebuchadnezzar might be from Judea, yet his yoke was to be borne, as it had been so appointed by God. This seems to me to be the reason why Jeremiah repeated the words, *Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon.*

There is also a denunciation of punishment, that God would *visit with pestilence, famine, and the sword.* We know that these words are commonly mentioned in Scripture, when it is God's purpose to set forth the signs of his wrath. He has indeed various and innumerable ways by which he chastises us; but these are his most remarkable and most known scourges, the pestilence, the sword, and the famine. He then says, that he would visit the nations who would not obey King Nebuchadnezzar with these three scourges; and at the same time he shews what the end would be, *until I slay*, or consume *them by his hand.* He not only threatens them with pestilence, famine, and the sword, but he also shews that the end would be such, that the nations who might at first obstinately resist, would yet be constrained to undertake the yoke, and to acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar as their king and master. This is the reason why he says, *by his hand.*

Death might have seemed lighter, if only they could have escaped the tyranny of Nebuchadnezzar; but since both would happen to them, even to be consumed by famine, the sword, and the pestilence, and yet not to be able to escape bondage, it was a miserable prospect indeed. We now then perceive why God speaks of the hand of the King Nebuchadnezzar; it was, that the Jews might know that they could effect nothing by seeking means to escape, for they would at length, willing or unwilling, be brought under the hand and under the yoke of this king.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not in various ways to arm thine hand against us, we may, being at least touched by thy holy admonitions, humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, and thus anticipate thy judgment, so that thou mayest meet us as a merciful and gracious God, and not only remit to us the punishments which we have deserved, but also shew and perpetuate to us thy paternal favour, until, having been led by thine hand, we shall come unto that celestial kingdom which thou hast prepared for us, and which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fourth.

9. Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:

9. Et vos ne audiatis prophetas vestros, et divinos vestros, et somniatores vestros, et augures vestros, et incantatores vestros, qui dicunt vobis (loquuntur vobiscum dicendo; *est quidem idem verbum, sed repetitio esset nimis dura,*) Non servietis (*vel,* ne serviatis) regi Babylonis (*est verbum futuri temporis, sed quidam accipiunt in modo hortandi, ut satis tritum est in lingua Hebraica.*)

As Jeremiah had declared to the king, as well as to the citizens, that they could not escape the punishment that was at hand, he now shakes off from them that vain confidence, which was as an obstacle in the way, so that they were not touched by threatenings, nor received wholesome warnings. For the false prophets deceived them by their flatteries, and

promised that all things would happen prosperously to them. As then the Prophet saw that the ears both of the king and of the people were closed against him, so that he could do little or nothing by exhorting and threatening them, he added what he deemed necessary, even that all the things which the false prophets vainly said were altogether fallacious.

He therefore said, *Hear ye not your prophets and your diviners;* for קסם, *kosam*, is to divine; then he adds, *your dreamers;* in the fourth place, *your augurs;* in the fifth place, *your sorcerers*, or charmers. Some indeed regard עננים, *onnim*, as observers of time, for עונה, *oune*, is a stated time, hence they who imagine that a thing is to be done on this or that day, and promise a happy issue, were called, as they think, עננים, *onnim*, because they superstitiously observed hours and periods of time. But as ענן, *onen*, means a cloud, they may also be called עננים, *onnim*, who divined by the stars, and hence took counsel as to what was to be done.[1]

But let us now inquire, whether Jeremiah speaks of such dreamers, and others as were among the Jews, or whether he includes also such as were found among the neighbouring nations. It seems probable to me, that what he says ought to be confined to the Jews; for I take the word *ye*, as emphatical, *Hear ye not*, &c. There follows afterwards an explanation, *According to these words have I spoken to the king;* and then he adds, that he spoke to the priests and to the people. Hence then we conclude, that the whole of this part was probably addressed to the Jews alone. Divinations,

[1] The five names here mentioned are thus explained by *Venema*,—
1. Prophets—who claimed divine inspiration;
2. Diviners—who prognosticated by means of lots and arrows;
3. Dreamers—who pretended that they had divine dreams;
4. Astrologers—who foretold events by the clouds and stars;
5. Sorcerers—who pretended to have familiar converse with some spirit.

Parkhurst considers the second, diviners, as a general term, meaning those who divined either by dreams or stars, or familiar spirits; and he renders the fourth word cloudmongers, though he considers that they prognosticated by the stars, as well as by meteors, thunder, lightning, and probably by the flight of birds; but he regards the last word as meaning those who pretended to discover hidden and future things by *magical* means. How completely heathenized were the Jews become! they believed all these Pagan delusions rather than the infallible oracles of God! and yet these were things expressly forbidden in their law.—*Ed.*

auguries, and incantations, were indeed prohibited in the Law; but we well know how often the Jews gave up themselves to these tricks of the devil, the Law of God being wholly despised by them. It is then no wonder if at this time there were among them magicians, as well as augurs and diviners, notwithstanding the manifest prohibition of the Law. We may, however, so understand these words, as that the Prophet compared these false prophets to diviners, as well as to augurs and sorcerers. He sets, in the first place, the prophets, but in mentioning them, he seems to mark them with disgrace, because they had departed from their own office, and had assumed another character, for they deceived the people, as augurs, diviners, and magicians were wont to deceive the nations.

It is indeed certain, as I have before reminded you, that the Prophet spoke, not for the sake of other nations, but that the Jews might be rendered inexcusable, or, if there was any hope of repentance, that they might be reminded not to proceed in their usual course. We hence see the meaning of the words, and at the same time perceive the design of the Prophet, or rather of the Holy Spirit, who spoke by his mouth.

I said at first that the Prophet met an objection, which might have lessened or taken away the authority of his doctrine; for it was not a small trial, that the prophets denied that any evil was at hand. For the prophetic name was ever held in great repute and respect among the Jews. But we see also at this day, and experience sufficiently teaches us, that men are more ready to receive error and vanity, than to receive the word of God; and so it was then, and the Jews imagined that they honoured God, because they regarded his Prophets. But when any one faithfully performed the prophetic office, he was often despised. The Jews therefore were taken up only with a mere name, and thought that they did all that was required by saying that they attended to the prophets, while at the same time they boldly despised the true servants of God. It is so at this day; while the name of the Catholic Church is boasted of under the Papacy, it seems that a regard is had for God; but when the word of

God is brought forward, when what has been spoken by apostles and prophets is adduced, it is regarded almost as nothing. We hence see that the Papists separate God as it were from himself, as the Jews formerly did.

And hence also we see how necessary it was for Jeremiah to remove such a stumblingblock; for the Jews might have pertinaciously insisted on this objection,—"Thou alone threatenest us with exile; but we have many who glory in being prophets, and who promise safety to us: wouldest thou have us to believe thee alone rather than these who are many?" Thus the Prophet, being alone, had to contend with the false prophets, who were many. And we have now a similar contest with the Papists; for they boast of their number; and then they object, that nothing would be certain, if it was allowed to every one to appeal to the word of God. They hence conclude that we ought simply to believe the Church, and to receive whatever is brought under the pretence of being Scripture. But Jeremiah had confidence in his own vocation, and had really proved his divine mission, and also that he proclaimed the messages which he had received from the mouth of God. As then he had given certain proofs of his vocation, he had a right to oppose all those false prophets, and not only to disregard their lies, but also in a manner to tread them under his feet, as he seems to have done, *Hear ye not*, he says, *your prophets*.

He concedes to them an honourable name, but improperly. It is therefore a catachristic way of speaking, when he names them prophets; but he leaves them their title, as it was not necessary to contend about words. Yet he shews at the same time that they were wholly unworthy of being heard. Hence no authority was left them, though a mere empty name was conceded to them. It is the same at this day, when we call those priests, bishops, and presbyters, who cover themselves with these masks, and yet shew that there is in them nothing episcopal, nothing ecclesiastical, and, in short, nothing that belongs to the doctrine of Christ, or to any lawful order.

He afterwards adds, *Who say to you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon*. We have said that the last clause

is rendered by some as an exhortation, *Serve ye not the king of Babylon*, as though the false prophets stimulated the Jews to shake off the yoke. But the proper meaning of the verb may be still retained, *Ye shall not serve;* for we know that the false prophets, when they came forth, pretended to be God's ambassadors, sent to promise tranquillity, peace, and prosperity to the Jews. Thus they feigned to do, when yet God, as it has been stated, and as we shall again see presently, had testified that there was no other remedy for the people but by submitting to the king of Babylon. It follows—

10. For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land: and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

10. Quia mendacium ipsi prophetant vobis, ut procul abducant vos e terra vestra, et ejiciam vos, et peratis.

This verse also confirms what I have said,—that this discourse was designed for the Jews, and that it was peculiarly for them; for what is said here could not be applied to heathen nations. What then had been lately said of augurs, magicians, and diviners, ought no doubt to be understood of those impostors who, under the name of prophets, deceived that miserable people.

He says that they *prophesied falsehood.* Many, no doubt, adduced, for the purpose of opposing him, their own evasions: "Art thou alone to be believed? dost thou alone tell the truth? how dost thou prove that what thou teachest is an oracle from heaven, and that these deceive us?" For so do the ungodly usually clamour, as we see to be the case at this day with the Papists, who cover themselves with a pretence of this kind: for whatever abomination there may be, they cover it over by means of this sophistry alone,—that the Scripture is obscure, and that controversy is uncertain, and that therefore nothing is to be believed but what the Church has decreed: so with them the definition of men, as they say, is the only rule of faith; and hence, also, the whole authority of Scripture is by them trodden under foot, as though God had in vain spoken by his own prophets and apostles. There is no doubt but the doctrine of Jeremiah was opposed by such clamours: he however persevered in the course of his office, and boldly condemned the prophets, that they only deceived the Jews by their lies.

He adds, *that they may remove you far from your land.* I have said that this cannot be applied to other nations: but God gave a hope of mercy to his people, provided they willingly obeyed the king of Babylon. It was not indeed a full pardon; yet it was owing to his kindness that God did not treat the Jews with strict justice, but chastised them with gentleness and paternal moderation: for it was an endurable punishment, to remain in their own country and to pay tribute to the king of Babylon. God then would have mitigated the punishment of the people, if only they had willingly undertaken the yoke. This is what Jeremiah now says: "The false prophets seek only this, to drive you far from your country; for they would have you to think that you shall be free from all punishment: but God is prepared to deal gently with you; though he will not wholly pass by your vices, yet your chastisement will be one easily borne, for ye shall remain in your own country. But if ye will believe these impostors, they will lead you away into distant exile; for God says, *I will cast you away, and ye shall perish.*"[1]

If it be objected again that the Jews could not form a certain opinion, whether Jeremiah was to be believed rather than the others who were many, the answer is at hand: they were themselves conscious of being wicked, and there was no need of long debates to ascertain what was true; for every one found God's judgment to be against himself, as they had departed from the pure worship of God, and had polluted themselves with many ungodly superstitions, and a license in all kinds of sins had also prevailed among them: they had been warned, not once, nor for one day, but by many prophets, and also continually and for a long time. As then

[1] This is more suitable than our version: the verse may be rendered thus,—

10. For falsely do they prophesy to you, so as to remove you away far from your own land; for I will drive you away and ye shall perish, (that is, from the land.)

The word שקר may often be rendered adverbially. That ו may sometimes be rendered *for*, is evident: he threatens expulsion and ruin in case they listened to false prophesying; then, in the next verse, he promises continuance in the land to the obedient, "But the nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will make that to settle on its land, saith Jehovah, that it may cultivate it and abide in it."—*Ed.*

they had thus provoked God's vengeance by their obstinate wickedness, how could they be in doubt respecting Jeremiah, whether he had, as from the mouth of God, and as a celestial herald declared to them what they deserved? And surely whenever men pretend that they have fallen through error or ignorance, they can always be deprived of this evasion; for their own conscience convicts them, and is sufficient to condemn them.

God adds, that the Jews would *perish*, except they anticipated extreme judgment, that is, except they submitted to paternal chastisement. This passage deserves to be specially noticed, as we shall presently see again; for we are here taught that whenever God shews some signs of displeasure, there is nothing better for us than to prepare ourselves for patience; for we shall thus ever give place and a free passage to his mercy: but by pertinacity we gain nothing, and do nothing but kindle his wrath more and more. This then is what Jeremiah means when he declares, that they who submitted not to the king of Babylon would perish. It follows—

11. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.

11. Gens autem quæ adduxerit cervicem suam sub jugum regis Babylonis, et servierit ei, relinquam eam in terra sua, dicit Jehova, et colet eam et habitabit in ea.

He seems indeed to speak here indiscriminately of all nations; but the admonition belongs to the Jews alone, as we have said, and as it appears from the context. He seems however to mention the nations, that he might more sharply touch the Jews, as though he had said, "Though God's promises are not to be extended to heathen nations, yet God will spare the Tyrians and the Moabites, if they submit quietly to the king of Babylon, and take upon them his yoke. If God will spare heathen nations, when yet he has promised them nothing, what may his chosen people expect? But if he will punish nations who err in darkness, what will become of a people who knowingly and wilfully resist God and his judgments?" For obstinacy in the Jews was mad impiety, as though they avowedly designed to carry on war

with God; for they knew that Nebuchadnezzar was the executioner of God's vengeance. When therefore they ferociously attempted to exempt themselves from his power, it was to fight with God, as though they would not submit to his scourges.

We now then perceive why Jeremiah spoke what we here read, not only of the Jews, but also generally of all nations, *The nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serves him, I will leave it in its own land.* We must yet bear in mind what I have before said, that the Jews were the people especially regarded. If, then, they had given place to God's kindness, he would have graciously spared them, and they would have perpetually enjoyed their own inheritance; but it was their obstinacy that drove them far into exile. And hence he adds, *I will leave it in its land; and it shall cultivate it and dwell in it.*

There is a striking allusion in the word עָבַד, *obed*, for it means to serve, and also to cultivate; but there is to be understood a contrast between cultivating the land and that subjection, to which he exhorted the Jews, as though he had said,—"Serve the king of Babylon, that the land may serve you; it will be the reward of your obedience, if you will submit yourselves to the power of the king of Babylon, that the land will submit to you, and you will compel it to serve you, so that it will bring forth food for you." We hence see that God promised that the land would serve the people, if they refused not to serve the king of Babylon.

And hence also we may gather useful instruction,—that all the elements would be serviceable to us, were we willingly to obey God, but that on the contrary, the heaven, and the earth, and all the elements will be opposed to us, if we pertinaciously resist God. But Jeremiah speaks here more expressly of the submission which men render to God, when they calmly receive his correction, and acknowledge, while he inflicts punishment, that they justly deserve it, and do not refuse to be chastised by his hand. When, therefore, men thus submit to God's judgment, they obtain his favour, so that the earth, and heaven, and all the elements will serve them. But the more perversely men exalt themselves and

raise their horns against God, the more bondage shall they feel; for their own chains bind them stronger than anything else, when they thus struggle with God and do not humble themselves under his mighty hand. The same thing the Prophet still more clearly confirms when he says,—

12. I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.

12. Ad Zedekiam ergo regem Jehudah loquutus sum secundum cunctos sermones istos, dicendo, Adducite colla vestra ad jugum regis Babylonis et servite ei et populo ejus, et vivetis.

This verse proves with sufficient clearness that what we have hitherto explained was spoken especially to the chosen people; for Jeremiah tells us here, that he spoke to the King Zedekiah, and in the sixteenth verse he adds that he spoke to the priests and to the people. He was not then sent as a teacher to the Moabites, the Tyrians, and other foreign nations; but God had prescribed to him his limits, within which he was to keep. He therefore says, that he *spoke to the king.*

We hence learn what he had before said, that he was set over kingdoms and nations; for the doctrine taught by the prophets is higher than all earthly elevations. Jeremiah was, indeed, one of the people, and did not exempt himself from the authority of the king, nor did he pretend that he was released from the laws, because he possessed that high dignity by which he was superior to kings, as the Papal clergy do, who vauntingly boast of their immunity, which is nothing else but a license to live in wickedness. The Prophet then kept himself in his own rank like others; and yet when he had to exercise his spiritual jurisdiction in God's name, he spared not the king nor his counsellors; for he knew that his doctrine was above all kings; the prophetic office, then, is eminent above all the elevations of kings.

And skilfully no less than wisely did the Prophet exercise his office by first assailing the king, as he had been sent to him. At the same time he addressed him in the plural number, *Bring ye your neck,* he says; and he did so, because the greater part of the people depended on the will of their king. Then he adds, *Serve ye his people.* It was, indeed, a

thing very unpleasant to be heard, when the Prophet commanded the Jews to submit, not only to the king of Babylon, but also to all his subjects; it was an indignity that must have greatly exasperated them. But he added this designedly, because he saw that he had to do with men refractory and untamable. As, then, they were not pliant, he dealt the more sharply with them, as though he wished to break down their foolish pride. It was not therefore a superfluous expression, when he bade the Jews to obey all the Chaldeans; for they had been so blinded by perverse haughtiness, that for a long time they had resisted God and his prophets, and continued untamable.

There is afterwards added a promise, *and ye shall live*;[1] which confirms the truth to which I have referred,—that it is the best remedy for alleviating evils, to acknowledge that we are justly smitten, and to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; for thus it happens, that evils are turned into medicines, and thus become salutary to us. Whatever punishment is inflicted on us for our sins, as it is a sign of God's wrath, so in a manner it places death before our eyes. Punishment, then, in itself can do nothing but fill us with dread, nay, overwhelm us with despair; and I speak of punishment even the slightest; for we suffer nothing which does not remind us of our sin and guilt, as though God summoned us to his tribunal. How dreadful surely it must be to sustain this, and to fall into the hands of the living God? Hence, when God touches us as it were with his little finger, we cannot but fall down through fear. But this comfort is given to us, that punishment, though in itself grievous and as it were fatal, becomes profitable to us, when we allow God to be our judge, and are prepared to endure whatever seems good to him.

This is what the Prophet means, when he promises that the Jews would *live*, if they submitted to the king of Babylon; not that they could merit life by their obedience; but the only way by which we can obtain God's favour and be

[1] This is an imperative in Hebrew, *and live*, but in all the early versions it is in the future tense, as rendered here by *Calvin*. The meaning is the same.—*Ed.*

reconciled to him, is willingly to condemn ourselves; for we anticipate extreme judgment, as Paul says, when we condemn ourselves; and then we shall not be condemned by God. (1 Cor. xi. 31.) For how is it, that God is so angry with the wicked, except that they wish to be forgiven while in their sins? But this is to pull him down from his throne, for he is not the judge of the world, if the ungodly escape unpunished and laugh at all his threatenings. So also on the other hand, when in true humility we suffer ourselves to be chastised by God, he becomes immediately reconciled to us. This, then, is the life mentioned here.[1] It follows,—

13. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?

13. Quare peribitis tu et populus tuus gladio, fame et peste, quemadmodum loquutus est Jehova super gentem quæ non servierit regi Babylonis?

Here is a threatening added; for all means were used not only to invite the Jews, but also to stimulate them to repent. The Prophet offered them pardon, if they quietly submitted to be chastised by God. It was to be their life, he said, when the Lord punished them according to his will. As they could not be sufficiently moved by this kindness, he now adds, "See ye to it, for except ye receive the life offered to you, you must inevitably perish. Therefore thou, Zedekiah, wilt precipitate thyself with all thy people into eternal destruction, if ye continue to be perverse and obstinate against God."

We hence see that nothing was left undone by the Prophet to bend the Jews to obedience and to lead them to repentance. By speaking of the *sword, famine, and pestilence*, he intimates that there would be no end, until they were consumed by God's vengeance, except they suffered themselves, as we have said, to be thus chastised by his paternal kindness, for this would be salutary to them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not often and continually to provoke thy wrath against us, we may of our own accord an-

[1] No doubt we may extend this promise to spiritual life, but here it means living in the land of Canaan, as opposed to the perdition or expatriation in ver. 10.— *Ed.*

ticipate thy judgment, and not harden ourselves in our sins, having been especially warned by thy word, but in due time repent, and so submit ourselves to thee, that whatever thou mayest appoint for us, we may not doubt but thou wilt be propitious to us; and while fleeing to thy mercy, may we not refuse the punishment thou deemest expedient to bring us to the right way, until having at length put off all our corruptions, we shall enjoy that eternal inheritance, which is laid up for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty.

We said yesterday, that as the Prophet saw that there was great insensibility in the Jews, so that they disregarded all God's promises, he added terror to the hope of mercy. Hence he said, "Ye shall perish, thou and thy people." He was, no doubt, constrained by necessity to speak in this severe way; for the kind exhortation which he had used availed nothing; and yet God shewed at the same time by his threatening how much he loved the people; for he had a sympathy for them, and as it is said elsewhere, he willed not the death of the sinner, but sought to induce those who were not wholly irreclaimable to repent that they might live. The same thing we now learn from these words of the Prophet; for God assumes the character of a man ready to give help, and sympathizes with the miseries of a people whom he saw rushing headlong into destruction. It now follows,—

14. Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

14. Et ne audiatis verba prophetarum, qui dicunt vobis (qui loquuntur vobiscum, dicendo,) Non servietis regi Babylonis; quia mendacium ipsi prophetant vobis.

He repeats the same words which we have met with before; there is therefore no need of dwelling long on them here. Yet the repetition was not superfluous; for he had a hard contest with the false prophets, who had attained great authority. As Jeremiah alone made an onset on the whole multitude, the greater part of them might have objected and said, that in matters of such perplexity there was nothing certain or clear. As therefore it was not easy to convince

the Jews who were disposed to believe the false prophets, it was necessary to say the same thing often, as we shall also see hereafter. He adds,—

15. For I have not sent them, saith the Lord, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

15. Quia non misi eos, dicit Jehova, et ipsi prophetant in nomine meo ad mendacium (*id est*, fallacium) ut vos ejiciam, et pereatis vos et prophetæ, qui prophetant vobis.

He confirms what he had said, that they had not been sent by God. The object is to shew the Jews, that they were not to receive thoughtlessly everything presented to them under God's name, but that they were to exercise discrimination and judgment. This is a passage worthy of special notice, for the devil has ever falsely assumed God's name; and for all the errors and delusions which have ever prevailed in the world, he has not obtained credit otherwise than by this false pretence. And at this day we see that many are wilfully blind, because they think they are excused before God if they can pretend ignorance, and they say that they are not wickedly credulous, but they dare not make curious inquiries. As then there are many who wilfully put on nooses and also wish to be deceived, we ought to notice what the Prophet says here, that we ought to distinguish the true from false prophets; for what purpose? even that we may receive them only, and depend on their words who have been sent by the Lord.

It may be here asked, how comes this difference? It was formerly necessary for prophets to be raised in a special manner, for it was a special gift to predict future and hidden events. Hence the prophetic was not an ordinary office like the sacerdotal. That promise indeed ever continued in force, "A prophet will I raise to thee from the midst of thy brethren." (Deut. xviii. 18.) But though this was a perpetual favour conferred by God on the Israelites, yet the prophets were ever called in a special manner; no one was to take this office except endued with an extraordinary gift. Though Jeremiah was a priest, yet he was not on that account a prophet; but God, as we have seen, made him a prophet. But with regard to us, the matter is different, for God does

not at this day predict hidden events; but he would have us to be satisfied with his Gospel, for in it is made known to us the perfection of wisdom. As then we live in "the fulness of time," God does not reveal prophecies so as to point out this or that thing to us in particular. We may now obtain certainty as to the truth, if we form our judgment according to the Law, and the Prophets, and the Gospel. There is indeed need of the spirit of discernment; but we shall never go astray, if we depend on the mouth of God, and follow the example of the Bereans, of whom Luke speaks in the Acts, who says, that they carefully read the Scriptures, and searched whether things were as they were taught by Paul. (Acts xvii. 11.) No wrong was done to Paul, when the disciples, in order to confirm their faith, inquired whether his preaching was agreeable to the Law and to the Prophets. So also now, all doctrines ought to be examined by us; and if we follow this rule, we shall never go astray.

As to the ancient people, they could not, as it was said yesterday, be deceived, for the prophets were only interpreters of the Law. With regard to future things, this or that was never predicted by the prophets, unless connected with doctrine, which was as it were the seasoning, and gave a relish to the prophecies; for when they promised what was cheering, it was founded on the eternal covenant of God; and when they threatened the people, they pointed out their sins, so that it was necessary for God to execute his vengeance when their wickedness was incurable. Ever to be borne in mind then is that which is said in Deuteronomy, that God tried his people whenever he gave loose reins to false prophets, (Deut. xiii. 3,) for every one who sincerely and undissemblingly loves him shall be guided by his Spirit. This then is the sure trial which God makes as to his faithful people, according to what Paul also says, who refers to this testimony of Moses, that heresies arise in order that they who are the faithful and sincere servants of God, might thereby shew what they really are, (1 Cor. xi. 19;) for they do not fluctuate at every wind of doctrine, but remain firm and constant in the pure obedience of faith. Rightly then

does Jeremiah say, that they who gave hope of impunity to the people, had not been sent by the Lord; for every one had his own conscience as his judge.

He adds, *They prophesy falsely in my name.* We see how sedulously and prudently we ought to take heed lest the devil should fascinate us by his charms, especially when the name of God is pretended. It is then not enough for us to hear, "Thus has God spoken," unless we are fully persuaded that those who use such a preface have been called by him, and that they also afford a sure evidence of their call, so that we may be certain that they are as it were the instruments of the Spirit. Ungodly men will find here an occasion for clamouring, because God does in a manner make a mock of the anxiety of men, for he might send angels from heaven, he might himself speak; but when he employs men, and permits false prophets to boast of this word and of that, while they wholly dissemble, he seems in this way as though he designedly bewildered miserable men. But there is nothing better for us than to acknowledge that our obedience is tried by God, when he addresses us by men; for we know that nothing is more contrary to faith than pride, as also humility is the true principle of faith and the real entrance into God's kingdom. This then is the reason why God makes use of men.

In the meantime, when impostors creep in and boast that they are true legitimate prophets, it is indeed a grievous trial, and much to be feared; yet God, as I have said, will ever relieve us, provided we trust not to our own judgment, and assume not to ourselves more than what is just and right, but look to him as the judge, and submit ourselves to his word; and further, if we suffer ourselves to be ruled by his Spirit, he will ever give us wisdom, which will enable us to distinguish between true and false prophets. However this may be, we clearly see that it is no new thing for Satan's ministers to prophesy in God's name, that is, falsely to assume his name, when in reality and truth they are vain pretenders.

He afterwards adds, *that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish,* as well as they. Here Jeremiah reminded

them, that the prophets who promised impunity could not at length escape, but that they would have to suffer punishment not only for their presumption, but also for those sins by which they, together with the whole people, had already provoked the wrath of God; for their crime was twofold: despising God, they had promised all liberty to indulge in sin; and they had also dared to come forth and to pretend God's name, though they had not been called, nor did they bring, as we have said, any message from God. But the Prophet again repeated, that such prophets were instigated by the devil's artifice, in order to aggravate God's judgment; for the people, inebriated with joy, added sins to sins, as security is wont to lead men to all kinds of wickedness. There is therefore nothing more ruinous than for false teachers to flatter sinners, and so to cajole and wheedle them as to make them to think that they have nothing to do with God; for the devil rules then indeed, when men's consciences are thus asleep in a deadly lethargy. He afterwards adds,—

16. Also I spake to the priests, and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

16. Et ad sacerdotes et ad populum hunc loquutus sum, dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova, Ne audiatis sermones prophetarum vestrorum, qui prophetant vobis, dicendo, Ecce vasa domus Jehovæ reducentur e Babylone nunc cito; mendacium ipsi prophetant vobis.

Jeremiah, as we have seen, did not deal privately with the king alone, for he did not separate him from the people; but as he had directed his words chiefly to him, he therefore expresses now what might have seemed obscure, that though he had begun with the king, he yet included all the Jews. It was indeed necessary to begin with the king, for we know that earthly kings think much of their own dignity, and that the whole people are dependent on their will. Hence Hosea condemned them, because they rendered a too willing obedience to royal edicts, and worshipped God according to what it pleased the king and his counsellors to dictate. (Hos. v. 11: Mic. vi. 16.) As then the royal name served to dazzle the eyes of the simple, Jeremiah was bidden to address first the king himself; but he now shews that the priests and the people were included.

raise their horns against God, the more bondage shall they feel; for their own chains bind them stronger than anything else, when they thus struggle with God and do not humble themselves under his mighty hand. The same thing the Prophet still more clearly confirms when he says,—

12. I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.

12. Ad Zedekiam ergo regem Jehudah loquutus sum secundum cunctos sermones istos, dicendo, Adducite colla vestra ad jugum regis Babylonis et servite ei et populo ejus, et vivetis.

This verse proves with sufficient clearness that what we have hitherto explained was spoken especially to the chosen people; for Jeremiah tells us here, that he spoke to the King Zedekiah, and in the sixteenth verse he adds that he spoke to the priests and to the people. He was not then sent as a teacher to the Moabites, the Tyrians, and other foreign nations; but God had prescribed to him his limits, within which he was to keep. He therefore says, that he *spoke to the king.*

We hence learn what he had before said, that he was set over kingdoms and nations; for the doctrine taught by the prophets is higher than all earthly elevations. Jeremiah was, indeed, one of the people, and did not exempt himself from the authority of the king, nor did he pretend that he was released from the laws, because he possessed that high dignity by which he was superior to kings, as the Papal clergy do, who vauntingly boast of their immunity, which is nothing else but a license to live in wickedness. The Prophet then kept himself in his own rank like others; and yet when he had to exercise his spiritual jurisdiction in God's name, he spared not the king nor his counsellors; for he knew that his doctrine was above all kings; the prophetic office, then, is eminent above all the elevations of kings.

And skilfully no less than wisely did the Prophet exercise his office by first assailing the king, as he had been sent to him. At the same time he addressed him in the plural number, *Bring ye your neck*, he says; and he did so, because the greater part of the people depended on the will of their king. Then he adds, *Serve ye his people.* It was, indeed, a

false prophets; so at this day do the bishops; they send forth their monks and such like brawlers, who run here and there to deceive the ignorant people, and they secure a hearing to them. And what is the burden of their message? to bid men to attend to the holy Catholic Church; and what is the Catholic Church? The Synod which the Pope assembles, where the mitred bishops sit; for what purpose? That they may know what pleases these brawlers, to whom is committed the office of disputing. We hence see that all things under the Papacy are at this day in great disorder; and yet this horrible disorder differs nothing from that of old. And it is, as I have said, what ought to be particularly noticed, that our faith may not fail, when we see all things in a confusion and hardly any order remaining.

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17. Hearken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?

17. Ne audiatis ipsos, servite regi Babylonis, et vivetis: ut quid erit urbs hæc desolatio (*hoc est*, in vastitatem?)

It is not to be wondered at that Jeremiah said the same things so often, for, as we have seen, he had to contend with false prophets. When any one speaks, and there be no dispute and no adversary opposing him, he may calmly deal with the teachable and confine himself to a few words; but when contention arises, and opponents appear, who may seek to subvert what we say, then we must exercise more care, for they who are thus driven different ways, will not be satisfied with a few words. As, then, Jeremiah saw that the people were fluctuating, he found it necessary, in order to confirm them, to use many words; not that prolixity is in itself sufficient to produce conviction; yet there is no doubt but that Jeremiah spoke efficiently so as to influence at least some portion of the people. Besides, it was necessary to dwell more expressly on a subject not very plausible; the false prophets were heard with favour, and the greater part greedily devoured what was set forth by them; for the hope of impunity is always pleasing and sought after by the world.

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He adds, *Why should this city be a desolation?* He set before them the city in which God's sanctuary was, and by the sight of it he tried to turn them to repentance; for it was extremely base to harden themselves against the warnings of the prophets, so as to cause the Temple of God to be demolished, and also the holy city to be reduced to a waste, in which God designed to have his dwelling, as he had said, "This is my rest for ever." (Ps. cxxxii. 14.) In short, he declared to the Jews that a most awful condemnation awaited them, if they suffered the city to perish through their own fault, and that they would be the authors of their own ruin, if they undertook not the yoke of the king of Babylon. It follows—

18. But if they *be* prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and *in* the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

18. Quod si Prophetæ sunt, et si est sermo Jehovæ cum ipsis (*id est*, apud ipsos,) intercedant ipsi apud Jehovam exercituum, ne veniant vasa, quæ supersunt in Templo Jehovæ, et in domo regis Jehudah et Jerosolymæ Babylonem.

Here the Prophet laughs to scorn the foolish confidence with which the false prophets were swollen, when they promised all happiness in time to come. He hence says, that they were not to be believed as to the prosperity of which

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He then says, *If they are prophets, let them intercede with Jehovah*, that what still remains may not be taken away from Jerusalem. They promised the return of the vessels, which had been already carried away to Babylon; and yet what still remained in the Temple and in the palace of the king and in the whole city, was to be removed to Babylon. We now perceive the Prophet's design; he compares the future with the past, and shews that these impostors foolishly promised some better state of things, even when God's heavy judgment was impending over them; for the city and the Temple were doomed to entire ruin. The verb פָּגַע, *pego*, means to meet, to go to meet, and is taken metaphorically in the sense of interceding; for he who meets one as an intercessor, in a manner restrains the opponent; and the Scripture uses this word, when it speaks of the saints as supplicating God; the proper word is interceding.[1]

From this passage we learn that these two things are united—teaching and praying. Then God would have him whom he has set a teacher in his Church, to be assiduous in prayer. And so the Apostles said, when they spoke of appointing deacons, that they could not attend to tables; for they said that they were sufficiently engaged in teaching, and they mentioned also prayers. (Acts vi. 2-4.) The same also we learn from this place, where Jeremiah ascribes the office of interceding to God's true and faithful servants who conscientiously discharged the office of teaching; *If they be prophets*, he says, *let them intercede with Jehovah*, that the remaining vessels be not taken away. Let us at the same time notice the definition he gives; for by this he also shews who are to be counted true prophets, even those who have the word of God, as we have found elsewhere, "The Prophet who has a dream, and who has my true word, let him speak my word." (Chap. xxiii. 28.) We said by these words of the Prophet it may be determined who they are who deserve to

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PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we continually by our many vices draw on ourselves new punishment, we may strive to be reconciled to thee, and thus anticipate thy judgment, and so submit to thee in true humility, that we may not by struggling against thee be untamable, but confess our guilt, obtain thy favour, and find reconciliation with thee, until having at length put off all our vices, we shall come to that blessed rest, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty.

19. For thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city,

20. Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;

21. Yea, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain *in* the house of the Lord, and *in* the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;

22. They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the Lord: then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

19. Quia sic dicit Jehova exercituum de columnis et de mari, et de basibus, et de residuo vasorum quæ supersunt in urbe hac,

20. Quæ non abstulit Nebuchadnezer rex Babylonis, cum adduxit captivum Jechaniam filium Jehoiakim regem Jehudah e Jerusalem, Babylonem, et omnes proceres Jehudah et Jerusalem;

21. Certe sic dicit Jehovah exercituum, Deus Israel, de vasis quæ supersunt in domo Jehovæ et in domo regis et in Jerusalem;

22. Babylonem transferentur, et illic erunt usque ad diem quo visitabo ea (*vel*, eos, *quod mihi magis placet*,) dicit Jehova; et ascendere faciam eos et reducam eos ad locum hunc.

JEREMIAH said, in the passage we considered yesterday, that it was more to be desired that God should keep what remained at Jerusalem, than that what had been taken away

does Jeremiah say, that they who gave hope of impunity to the people, had not been sent by the Lord; for every one had his own conscience as his judge.

He adds, *They prophesy falsely in my name.* We see how sedulously and prudently we ought to take heed lest the devil should fascinate us by his charms, especially when the name of God is pretended. It is then not enough for us to hear, "Thus has God spoken," unless we are fully persuaded that those who use such a preface have been called by him, and that they also afford a sure evidence of their call, so that we may be certain that they are as it were the instruments of the Spirit. Ungodly men will find here an occasion for clamouring, because God does in a manner make a mock of the anxiety of men, for he might send angels from heaven, he might himself speak; but when he employs men, and permits false prophets to boast of this word and of that, while they wholly dissemble, he seems in this way as though he designedly bewildered miserable men. But there is nothing better for us than to acknowledge that our obedience is tried by God, when he addresses us by men; for we know that nothing is more contrary to faith than pride, as also humility is the true principle of faith and the real entrance into God's kingdom. This then is the reason why God makes use of men.

In the meantime, when impostors creep in and boast that they are true legitimate prophets, it is indeed a grievous trial, and much to be feared; yet God, as I have said, will ever relieve us, provided we trust not to our own judgment, and assume not to ourselves more than what is just and right, but look to him as the judge, and submit ourselves to his word; and further, if we suffer ourselves to be ruled by his Spirit, he will ever give us wisdom, which will enable us to distinguish between true and false prophets. However this may be, we clearly see that it is no new thing for Satan's ministers to prophesy in God's name, that is, falsely to assume his name, when in reality and truth they are vain pretenders.

He afterwards adds, *that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish,* as well as they. Here Jeremiah reminded

them, that the prophets who promised impunity could not at length escape, but that they would have to suffer punishment not only for their presumption, but also for those sins by which they, together with the whole people, had already provoked the wrath of God; for their crime was twofold: despising God, they had promised all liberty to indulge in sin; and they had also dared to come forth and to pretend God's name, though they had not been called, nor did they bring, as we have said, any message from God. But the Prophet again repeated, that such prophets were instigated by the devil's artifice, in order to aggravate God's judgment; for the people, inebriated with joy, added sins to sins, as security is wont to lead men to all kinds of wickedness. There is therefore nothing more ruinous than for false teachers to flatter sinners, and so to cajole and wheedle them as to make them to think that they have nothing to do with God; for the devil rules then indeed, when men's consciences are thus asleep in a deadly lethargy. He afterwards adds,—

16. Also I spake to the priests, and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

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It was indeed like something monstrous, that the priests, whom God had designed to be the interpreters of his Law, should have become so stupid as thoughtlessly to receive, together with the common people, what they had heard from the false prophets. This surely was by no means compatible with that high encomium by which they are honoured by Malachi, that the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and that from him the Law is to be sought, because he is the messenger of the God of hosts. (Mal. ii. 7.) As then they were the guardians of the Law and of knowledge, as they were messengers from God himself to the people, how was it that their stupidity was so monstrous, that they did not distinguish between truth and falsehood, but were led astray, together with the most ignorant, by what the false prophets delivered!

This ought to be carefully noticed, that we may not at this day be too much disturbed, when we see the pastoral office assumed by ignorant asses, and that those who are called, and wish to be thought ministers, are so inexperienced in Scripture that they are deficient as to the first elements of religion. And we see the very thing happening at this day especially under the Papacy, as existed among the ancient people; for the Papal bishops are for the most part extremely stupid and presumptuous. There are to be found many husbandmen and artisans, who know nothing of learning, but have only heard what is obscure and indistinct, and yet they can speak better on the general principles of faith than these haughty prelates in all their splendour. How is this? even because the just reward for their sloth is rendered to them. They are verily ignorant of what should qualify them to be bishops, and yet they glory in the name! Yea, though they do not think that Episcopacy consists in anything but in revenues, and also in vain symbols, such as to be mitred, to wear an episcopal ring, and to exhibit other like trumperies, they yet suppose themselves to be a sort of half-gods. Hence it is, that God exposes them to the utmost reproach. The same was the case with the priests under the Law, as Jeremiah now shews; for they were not ashamed of their ignorance, but encouraged the people to believe the

false prophets; so at this day do the bishops; they send forth their monks and such like brawlers, who run here and there to deceive the ignorant people, and they secure a hearing to them. And what is the burden of their message? to bid men to attend to the holy Catholic Church; and what is the Catholic Church? The Synod which the Pope assembles, where the mitred bishops sit; for what purpose? That they may know what pleases these brawlers, to whom is committed the office of disputing. We hence see that all things under the Papacy are at this day in great disorder; and yet this horrible disorder differs nothing from that of old. And it is, as I have said, what ought to be particularly noticed, that our faith may not fail, when we see all things in a confusion and hardly any order remaining.

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Lecture One Hundred and Sixty.

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20. Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;

21. Yea, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain *in* the house of the Lord, and *in* the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;

22. They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the Lord: then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

19. Quia sic dicit Jehova exercituum de columnis et de mari, et de basibus, et de residuo vasorum quæ supersunt in urbe hac,

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22. Babylonem transferentur, et illic erunt usque ad diem quo visitabo ea (*vel*, eos, *quod mihi magis placet*,) dicit Jehova; et ascendere faciam eos et reducam eos ad locum hunc.

JEREMIAH said, in the passage we considered yesterday, that it was more to be desired that God should keep what remained at Jerusalem, than that what had been taken away

should be restored, for the time of punishment had not yet passed away; and thus he condemned the false teachers, because they had presumptuously and boldly promised a quick return as to the king as well as to those who had been led with him into exile. He now confirms the same thing, and says that what remained as yet at Jerusalem was already destined for their enemies the Babylonians, and would become their prey. Nebuchadnezzar had in part spared the Temple and the city; he had taken away chiefly the precious vessels, but had not entirely spoiled the Temple of its ornaments. As, then, some splendour was still to be seen there, the Jews ought to have learned that he had acted kindly towards them. He now says, that the Temple and the city would be destroyed; and this may be gathered from his words when he says, that there would be nothing remaining.

Thus saith Jehovah concerning the pillars, &c. There is no doubt but that Solomon spent much money on the pillars, as the Scripture commends the work. He adds, *concerning the sea*, which was a very large vessel, for from it the priests took water to wash themselves whenever they entered the Temple to perform their sacred duties. And though it was made of brass, it was yet of no small value on account of its largeness; and for this reason it was called sea. He mentions, in the third place, *the bases*.[1] *Jerome* reads, "To the bases," for the preposition is אל, but it means often *of*, or concerning, as it is well known. He then declares what God had determined as to the pillars as well as the sea and the bases. There were, indeed, other vessels besides; but he specified these in order that the king, and also the people, might know that nothing would be left remaining in the Temple.

And he also adds, *The residue of the vessels which remain in this city*. By adding, *which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not away*, he indirectly condemned the Jews, because they did not acknowledge that the cruelty of their enemy had been moderated by divine power. For we know

[1] Or foundations, those on which the sea or pillars stood. See 1 Kings vii. 27-37.—*Ed.*

how cruel were Babylonians, and how insatiable was their avarice, and that nothing would have been left in the Temple had not their hands been in a manner restrained by the hidden power of God. The Jews ought to have duly considered this, and therefore the Prophet alludes to their ingratitude when he says, that Nebuchadnezzar had not taken away the vessels when yet he led captive the *king* and *all the chief men*, both of the city and the whole land. There is, indeed, to be understood here a comparison between the less and the greater, as though he had said, "Nebuchadnezzar would not have been so gentle had not God moderated his spirit, for he spared not your king, he led into exile all your chief men; how, then, was it that he left anything to remain in your city, and that the pillars were not taken away? Did he despise them? They have been polished with exquisite skill, and the materials are very costly. Ye hence see that God gave you a proof of his mercy, for some things still remain safe in the city as well as in the Temple; yet ye disregard this so great a benefit bestowed on you by God; what, then, will at length happen to you?" We now perceive the Prophet's design in these words when he says, that the vessels were not taken away, even when the king was taken captive, and when the chief men of the land were led into exile.

Useful instruction may also be hence gathered. Whenever God chastises us, let us ever consider that he does not proceed to extremities; for the cause of murmuring, and often of despair, is this,—because we think that he deals with us with extreme rigour. But this happens through our sinful and perverted judgment; for God never afflicts us so severely but that some portion of kindness and of moderation ever appears; in a word, his judgments are always founded on his goodness. Were any one, therefore, rightly to call to mind how far he is from suffering extreme evils, it would conduce much to alleviate his sorrows. But when we reject every knowledge of God's goodness, and only consider his severity, we either murmur or in a manner become furious against him. But this passage teaches us, that when God leaves some residue to us, it is an evidence of his pater-

nal favour, and that therefore something more may be hoped for, provided we from the heart repent.

The design, then, of the Prophet's warning was, that the Jews might receive this remaining favour of God, and not proceed in their obstinacy until God again stretched forth his hand to destroy them.

He repeats again the same words, *Yea, thus saith Jehovah*, &c.; for so ought the particle כִּי, *ki*, to be rendered in this place.[1] And he emphatically expresses what was of itself sufficiently clear, that he might deeply imprint on their minds this declaration of God, and that thus some terror might penetrate into the hearts of those who were so obdurate that it was not easy to effect anything by a simple statement of the truth. *Thus*, then, *saith Jehovah of the vessels which yet remain in the Temple of Jehovah and in the palace of the king, They shall be carried to Babylon, and there they shall be*, &c. Jeremiah intimates that the Jews had no hope, as they were perversely resisting God and refusing to be chastised by his hand. And he says, *until the day in which I shall visit them*, the vessels; for so the reference may suitably be made; but as it is often the case in Hebrew to put a pronoun when anything remarkable is spoken without any noun, or a subject, as they say, preceding it, I am inclined to refer it to the Jews themselves; for the restoration of the vessels depended on that of the people. He means, then, that the vessels would be held captive until God allowed a free return to the people, which happened through the edict of Cyrus, after he had obtained power in Chaldea and Assyria.

It was the same thing as though the Jews were reminded that the exile which had been predicted would be long, and that they foolishly hoped for what the false prophets had promised as to the vessels; for God had no greater care for the vessels than for his chosen people, as the vessels were acceptable to God for the people's sake. Here, then, Jeremiah confirms what he has said elsewhere, and that

[1] A clear instance of the *affirmative* sense of this particle, for the passage can admit of no other, though the versions, except the *Syr.*, retain its causal sense.—*Ed.*

often, that the people would be captives until the day of visitation, that is, till the end of seventy years. *When*, therefore, says God, *I shall visit* the Jews themselves, I will then bring back also the vessels; and so it was permitted by the command of Cyrus. We now understand the simple meaning of the words. Another narrative follows,—

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which *was* of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests, and of all the people, saying,

2. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.

1. Factum est anno illo, principio regni Zedechiæ, regis Jehudah, anno quarto, mense quinto, loquutus ad me Chananiah, filius Assur, propheta qui erat e Guibeon (*oriundus e Guibeon*) in Templo Jehovæ, coram oculis sacerdotum et totius populi, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, confregi (*aut* contrivi) jugum regis Babylonis.

The Prophet relates here with what haughtiness, and even fury, the false prophet Hananiah came forward to deceive the people and to proclaim his trumperies, when yet he must have been conscious of his own wickedness.[1] It hence clearly appears how great must be the madness of those who, being blinded by God, are carried away by a satanic impulse. The circumstances of the case especially shew how great a contempt of God was manifested by this impostor; for he came into the Temple, the priests were present, the people were there, and there before his eyes he had the sanctuary and the ark of the covenant; and we know that the ark of the covenant is everywhere represented as having the presence of God; for God was by that symbol in a manner visible, when he made evident the presence of his power and favour in the Temple. As Hananiah then stood before God's eyes, how great must have been his stupidity to thrust himself forward and impudently to announce falsehood in the name

[1] Was he thus conscious, or given up to believe a lie? Was he led by ambition to act a part, or a conscientious bigot under the delusive influence of the evil spirit? In either case he was the servant of Satan; and are there not many like him still in the world?—*Ed.*

of God himself! He had yet no doubt but that he falsely boasted that he was God's prophet.

And he used the same words as Jeremiah did, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.* Surely these words ought to have been like a thunderbolt to him, laying prostrate his perverseness, even had he been harder than iron; for what does Jehovah of hosts mean? This name expresses not only the eternal existence of God, but also his power, which diffuses itself through heaven and earth. Ought not Hananiah then to have trembled when any other had alleged God's name? But now, though he derided and laughed to scorn the prophetic office as well as God's holy name, he yet hesitated not to boast that God was the author of this prophecy, which was yet nothing but an imposture. And he added, *the God of Israel*, so that he might be in nothing inferior to Jeremiah. This was a grievous trial, calculated not only to discourage the people, but also to break down the firmness of the holy Prophet. The people saw that God's name was become a subject of contest; there was a dreadful conflict, "God has spoken to me;" "Nay, rather to me." Jeremiah and Hananiah were opposed, the one to the other; each of them claimed to be a Prophet. Such was the conflict; the name of God seemed to have been assumed at pleasure, and flung forth by the devil as in sport.

As to Jeremiah, his heart must have been grievously wounded, when he saw that unprincipled man boldly profaning God's name. But, as I have already said, God in the meantime supported the minds of the godly, so that they were not wholly cast down, though they must have been somewhat disturbed. For we know that God's children were not so destitute of feeling as not to be moved by such things; but yet God sustained all those who were endued with true religion. It was indeed easy for them to distinguish between Jeremiah and Hananiah; for they saw that the former announced the commands of God, while the latter sought nothing else but the favour and plaudits of men.

But with regard to Hananiah, he was to them an awful spectacle of blindness and of madness, for he dreaded not the sight of God himself, but entered the Temple and pro-

faned it by his lies, and at the same time assumed in contempt the name of God, and boasted that he was a prophet, while he was nothing of the kind. Let us not then wonder if there be many mercenary brawlers at this day, who without shame and fear fiercely pretend God's name, and thus exult over us, as though God had given them all that they vainly prattle, while yet it may be fully proved that they proclaim nothing but falsehoods; for God has justly blinded them, as they thus profane his holy name. We shall now come to the words:

And it was in the same year, 'even *in the fourth of Zedekiah's reign*, &c. The fourth year seems to have been improperly called the *beginning* of his reign. We have said elsewhere, that it may have been that God had laid up this prophecy with Jeremiah, and did not design it to be immediately published. But there would be nothing strange in this, were the confirmation of his reign called its beginning. Zedekiah was made king by Nebuchadnezzar, because the people would not have been willing to accept a foreigner. He might indeed have set one of his own governors over the whole country; and he might also have made a king of one of the chief men of the land, but he saw that anything of this kind would have been greatly disliked. He therefore deemed it enough to take away Jeconiah, and to put in his place one who had not much power nor much wealth, and who was to be his tributary, as the case was with Zedekiah. But in course of time Zedekiah increased in power, so that he was at peace in his own kingdom. We also know that he was set over neighbouring countries, as Nebuchadnezzar thought it advantageous to bind him to himself by favours. This fourth year then might well be deemed the beginning of his reign, for during three years things were so disturbed, that he possessed no authority, and hardly dared to ascend the throne. This then is the most probable opinion.[1]

[1] *Gataker* mentions various attempted solutions of this difficulty, the one stated here; another, that eleven years, the extent of his reign, being divided into three parts, the three first and the beginning of the fourth might be deemed the beginning of his reign; and a third, which he prefers, that the fourth year refers not to Zedekiah, but to the Sabbatical

He says afterwards, that Hananiah *spoke* to him *in the presence of the priests and of the whole people.*[1] Hananiah ought at least to have been touched and moved when he heard Jeremiah speaking. He himself had no proof of his own call; nay, he was an impostor, and he knew that he did nothing but deceive the people, and yet he audaciously persisted in his object, and, as it were, avowedly obtruded himself that he might contend with the Prophet, as though he carried on war with God. He said, *Broken is the yoke of the king of Babylon*, that is, the tyranny by which he has oppressed the people shall be shortly broken. But he alluded to the yoke which Jeremiah had put on, as we shall presently see. The commencement of his prophecy was, that there was no reason for the Jews to dread the present power of the king of Babylon, for God would soon overthrow him. They could not have entertained hope of restoration, or of a better condition, until that monarchy was trodden under foot; for as long as the king of Babylon bore rule, there was no hope that he would remit the tribute, and restore to the Jews the vessels of the Temple. Hananiah then began with this, that God would break the power of the king of Babylon, so that he would be constrained, willing or unwilling, to let the people free, or that the people would with impunity extricate themselves from the grasp of his power. He then adds,—

3. Within two full years will

3. Adhuc (in adhuc, *ad verbum*) anni

year, it was the fourth in that cycle; and it appears that according to chronologers the destruction of Jerusalem happened on a Sabbatical year, the fourth in the eighteenth jubilee. In this case the first year of Zedekiah being the fourth after a Sabbath-year, his eleventh would correspond with the next period of their kind, allowance being made as to the commencement of the year in which he began to reign. *Blayney* adopts the second solution. Perhaps it would be best to take "beginning," as *Scott* does, as meaning the early or former part of his reign.

[1] Hananiah was, as some think, a priest, for Gibeon in the tribe of Benjamin was one of the cities allotted to the priests; he was, no doubt, by *profession*, a prophet, he is so called throughout by Jeremiah. There was among the Jews, from early times, an order of men called prophets; they were not all endued with the gift of prophecy, but were trained up in seminaries for the purpose. to be the interpreters of the law and teachers of the people. See 1 Sam. xix. 20; 2 Kings ii. 3; vi. 1. Hananiah was probably a prophet of this kind, and was on this account called a prophet by Jeremiah; but he appears here in another character, as a prophet endued with the spirit of prophecy. The scribes in the New Testament seem to have been the teaching prophets of the Old.

I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:

duo dierum (*hoc est*, cum transierint anni dierum duo,) ego reducam ad locum hunc omnia vasa domus Jehovæ (*id est*, Templi,) quæ abstulit Nebuchadnezer, rex Babylonis, a loco hoc et transportavit Babylonem:

We now see that what Hananiah had in view was to promise impunity to the people, and not only this, but also to soothe them with vain confidence, as though the people would have their king soon restored, together with the spoils which the enemy had taken away. But he began by referring to the power of the king, lest that terrible sight should occupy the minds of the people so as to prevent them to receive this joyful prophecy. He then says, *Further, when two years shall pass,*[1] *I will bring back to this place all the vessels which King Nebuchadnezzar has taken away.* Jeremiah had assigned to the people's exile seventy years, as it has been stated before, and as we shall hereafter often see; but here the false prophet says, that after two years the exile of the king and of the people would come to an end, and that the vessels which had been taken away would be restored; he speaks also of the king himself,—

4. And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

4. Et Jechaniam, filium Jehoiakim, regem Jehudah, et totam captivitatem (*hoc est*, totam turbam captivam; *est enim* גלות *nomen collectivum, ut alibi diximus*, totam *ergo* turbam captivam) Jehudah, quæ profecta est Babylonem (*hoc est*, qui abducti fuerunt, *vel*, qui profecti sunt; *sed violenter tracti tamen*) ego reducam ad hunc locum, dicit Jehova; quia contrivi jugum regis Babylonis.

Hananiah promised as to the king himself, what he had just predicted respecting the vessels of the Temple and of the palace. But it may be asked, how did he dare to give hope as to the restoration of Jeconiah, since that could not have been acceptable to Zedekiah? for Jeconiah could not have again gained what he had lost without the abdication of Zechariah; but he would have never submitted willingly

[1] It is better rendered in our version, "Within two full years;" literally "in during (that is, in the space of) two full years:" not at the end, but within two years. He took the range of two years, without specifying any particular time.—*Ed.*

to lose his own dignity and to become a private man, and to allow him who had been deprived of this high honour to return again. But there is no doubt but that he relied on the favour of the people, and that he was fully persuaded that if Zedekiah could ill bear to be thus degraded, he would yet be constrained to shew a different feeling; for Zedekiah himself regarded his own reign as not honourable, as he sat not in David's throne by the right of succession. He had been set on the throne by a tyrant, and he dared not to make any other pretence to the people than that he wished Jeconiah to return and to possess the kingdom of which he had been deprived. As then this impostor knew that the king dared not to shew any displeasure, but that his prophecy would be gratifying and acceptable to the people, he boldly promised what we here read respecting the return of Jeconiah.

He hence says in God's name, *Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and all the captive people, who have been led away to Babylon, will I restore to this place.* We see that he was ever inflated with the same arrogance, and that he wholly disregarded God, whose name he thus in sport profaned. But all this flowed from this fountain, even because he had been blinded by the righteous judgment of God.

He then confirms his own prophecy, repeating its beginning, *I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.*[1] He had made open for himself an entrance, by saying that the destruction of the Babylonian monarchy was at hand; and now, after having given utterance to what seemed good to him on the whole affair, he refers again to that event. As then he promised that the monarchy would not stand longer than two years, the Jews might have supposed that they would become free, and might thus have hoped for a happy state of things; and this was the design of the impostor; but what was the answer of Jeremiah? His opposition to him was frank and firm; but as he saw that he had incurred the ill-will of the people, he was anxious to remove it; and before he repeated what he had said of their seventy years in exile, he shewed that he had not eagerly received his commission,

[1] The tense here is not correctly given, the words are, "For I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon;" and so are all the Versions.—*Ed.*

as though he had been alienated from his people, or had disregarded their welfare, or had been carried away by some morbid feeling to bring a sad and mournful message. He therefore said,—

5. Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah, in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord,

6. Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the Lord do so: the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

5. Tunc dixit Jeremias propheta Chananiæ prophetæ coram oculis sacerdotum et coram oculis totius populi, qui stabant in domo Jehovæ (*hoc est*, in Templo,)

6. Et dixit Jeremias propheta, Amen, sic faciat Jehova, stabiliet Jehova sermones tuos, quos prophetasti ad reducendum (*hoc est*, ut reducantur) vasa Templi et tota captivitas ex Babylone ad hunc locum.

I have shortly reminded you of the design of the Prophet; for it was to be feared that the people would not hear him, or at least that they would not well receive him, as he had threatened them and handled them roughly and severely. We know that men ever seek to be flattered; hence adulations are ever delightfully received. Such is the pride of men, that they cannot bear to be called to an account for what they have done; and they become also indignant, when they see their crimes and vices brought to light; besides, they are so delicate and tender, that they avoid as much as they can all adverse rumours; and if any fear assails them, they instantly resist.

Now Jeremiah had been furnished with a twofold message, to expose the vices of the people, to shew that the Jews were unworthy to inherit the land, as they were covenant-breakers and despisers of God and of his Law; and then, as they had been so often refractory and perverse, he had another message, that they would not be suffered to escape unpunished, as they had in so many ways, and for so long a time continued to provoke God's wrath; all this was very displeasing to the people. It was therefore Jeremiah's object to turn aside the false suspicion under which he laboured, and he testified that he desired nothing more than the well-being of the people; "Amen," he said, "may it thus happen, I wish I were a false prophet; I would willingly retract, and that with shame, all that I have hitherto predicted, so great

is my care and anxiety for the safety of the public; for I would prefer the welfare of the whole people to my own reputation." But he afterwards added, as we shall see, that the promise of Hananiah was wholly vain, and that nothing would save the people from the calamity that was very near at hand.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou continuest to invite us to thyself, and often to remind us of our sins, that we may embrace the hope of mercy that is offered to us,—O grant, that we may not be ungrateful for this so great and invaluable a blessing, but come to thee in real humility and true repentance, and that trusting in thine infinite goodness, we may not doubt but that thou wilt be propitious to us, so that we may be kindled with the desire for true religion, and in all things obey thy word, that thy name may be glorified in us, until we shall at length come into that celestial glory, which thy Son hath obtained for us by his blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventh.

We began in the last Lecture to explain the answer of Jeremiah, when he said to Hananiah, "May God confirm thy words, and may the vessels of the Temple be restored to this place and return together with the captive people." We briefly stated what is now necessary again to repeat, that there were two feelings in the Prophets apparently contrary, and yet they were compatible with one another. Whatever God had commanded them they boldly declared, and thus they forgot their own nation when they announced anything of an adverse kind. Hence, when the Prophets threatened the people, and said that war or famine was near at hand, they doubtless were so endued with a heroic greatness of mind, that dismissing a regard for the people, they proceeded in the performance of their office; they thus strenuously executed whatever God had commanded them. But they did not wholly put off every humane feeling, but condoled with the miseries of the people; and though they denounced

on them destruction, yet they could not but receive sorrow from their own prophecies. There was, therefore, no inconsistency in Jeremiah in wishing the restoration of the vessels of the Temple and the return of the exiles, while yet he ever continued in the same mind, as we shall hereafter see.

If any one objects and says that this could not have been the case, for then Jeremiah must have been a vain and false prophet; the answer to this is, that the prophets had no recourse to refined reasoning, when they were carried away by a vehement zeal; for we see that Moses wished to be blotted out of the book of life, and that Paul expressed a similar wish, even that he might be an anathema from Christ for his brethren. (Exod. xxxii. 32; Rom. ix. 3.) Had any one distinctly asked Moses, Do you wish to perish and to be cut off from the hope of salvation? his answer, no doubt, would have been, that nothing was less in his mind than to cast away the immutable favour of God; but when his mind was wholly fixed on God's glory, which would have been exposed to all kinds of reproaches, had the people been destroyed in the Desert, and when he felt another thing, a solicitude for the salvation of his own nation, he was at the time forgetful of himself, and being carried away as it were beyond himself, he said, "Rather blot me out of the book of life;" and the case of Paul was similar. And the same view we ought to take of Jeremiah, when he, in effect, said, "I would I were a false prophet, and that thou hast predicted to the people what by the event may be found to be true." But Jeremiah did not intend to take away even the least thing from God's word; he only expressed a wish, and surrendered to God the care for the other, the credit and the authority of his prophecy. He did not, then, engage for this, as though he ought to have made it good, if the event did not by chance correspond with his prophecy; but he left the care of this with God, and thus, without any difficulty, he prayed for the liberation and return of the people. But it now follows—

7. Nevertheless, hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people;

7. Verum audi nunc (*vel*, agedum. *hortantis*) sermonem hunc, quem ego pronuncio (pronuncians sum) in auribus tuis et in auribus totius populi,—

8. The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old, prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

9. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.

8. Prophetæ qui fuerunt ante me et ante te a seculo, et prophetarunt super terras multas (*vel*, magnas) et regna magna de prælio, de malo et de peste:

9. Propheta qui prophetaverit de pace (*hoc est*, de rebus prosperis,) cum venerit sermo (*id est*, cum eventu comprobatus fuerit sermo prophetæ,) cognoscetur propheta quod miserit eum Jehova in veritate.

Jeremiah, having testified that he did not wish for anything adverse to his own people, but had a good will towards them, now adds that what he had predicted was yet most true. Here is seen more fully what I have said of his twofold feeling; for though the Prophet wished to consult the welfare of the people, he did not yet cease to render full obedience to God, and to announce those messages which were at the same time very grievous: thus Jeremiah did not keep silence, but became an herald of God's vengeance against the people. On the one hand, then, he shewed that he desired nothing more than the welfare and the safety of his people, and that yet it was not in his power nor in that of any mortal to change the celestial decree which he had pronounced. We hence see that God so influenced the minds and hearts of his servants, that they were not cruel or barbarous; and yet they were not made soft and pliable through the influence of humanity, but boldly declared what God had commanded them.

For this reason he said, *Nevertheless, hear thou this word which I pronounce in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people.* By these words Jeremiah indirectly condemned the vanity of Hananiah, who sought to flatter the people, and by his adulations hunted for favour and applause, as it is usual with such impostors. He then said that it availed him nothing to give the people the hope of a near deliverance, for God had not changed his purpose. And Jeremiah now boldly and openly opposed him, as he had sufficiently rebutted that ill-will with which he was unjustly loaded; for impostors ever find out calumnies by which they assail the faithful servants of God. He might at the beginning have objected to Jeremiah and said, "Thou art alienated from

thine own nation, thou art not touched by the many miseries by which we have been hitherto distressed, nor carest thou for what may happen to us in future." Thus he might have kindled hatred against Jeremiah, had he not cleared himself. But after he had testified that he felt kindly and was well affected towards his own nation, he assailed the impostor himself, and hesitated not to assert what seemed very grievous, that the people would become captives.

Yet Jeremiah seems here to have been smitten in some measure with fear; for he did not confirm his own prophecy, but left that as it were in suspense; and yet he doubtless exposed the false declaration of Hananiah. But we know that the whole of what the Prophet said is not recited; for he only in a brief way records the heads or the chief things; and further, as we shall presently see, Jeremiah could not act as he wished in the midst of such a tumult, for he would have spoken to the deaf; and as Hananiah had prejudiced the minds of almost all, the holy Prophet would not have been listened to while there was such a confusion. He was therefore satisfied with the brief assertion, that God would soon shew that Hananiah was a false witness in promising so quick a return to the captives and exiles.

But he makes here only a general statement, *The Prophets who have been before me and thee, and prophesied against many* (or great) *lands, and against great kingdoms, have prophesied of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.* The word רעה, *roe, evil,* is placed between two other kinds of evil; but it is to be taken here no doubt for famine, as it is evident from many other passages.[1] Then he adds, changing the number, "*When any prophet spoke of peace,* the event proved whether

[1] More than twenty MSS. read רעב, "famine," which may be considered as the true reading, though all the Versions favour the other.

It is rather difficult to render this verse. *Calvin* here repeats the word "prophesied," which perhaps would be the best construction. There is a ו before "prophesied" in the text, which connects it with "have been." I would then render it as follows,—

8. The prophets, who have been before me and before thee from the beginning, and have prophesied concerning many lands and against mighty kingdoms, *have prophesied* of war, and of famine, and of pestilence.

There were prophets who did not prophesy "concerning many lands," &c.; he refers not to these, but to those who had done this.—*Ed.*

or not he was a true prophet.[1] Now, experience itself will shortly prove thee to be false, for after two years the people who are now in Babylon will be still there under oppression, and the condition of the residue will be nothing better, for those who now remain in the city and throughout all Judea shall be driven into exile as well as their brethren."

Jeremiah seems here to conclude that those alone are to be deemed true prophets who prove by the event that they have been sent from above; and it not only appears that this may be gathered from his words, but it may also be shewn to be the definition of a true prophet; for when the event corresponds with the prophecy, there is no doubt but that he who predicted what comes to pass must have been sent by God. But we must bear in mind what is said in Deut. xiii. 1, 2, where God reminds the people that even when the event answers to the prophecy, the prophets are not to be thoughtlessly and indiscriminately believed, as though they predicted what was true; "for God," he says, "tries thee," that is, proves thy faith, whether thou wilt be easily carried away by every wind of doctrine." But there are two passages, spoken by Moses himself, which at the first sight seem to militate the one against the other. We have already quoted the first from Deuteronomy, the thirteenth chapter; we have the other in the eighteenth chapter, verse 18, "The prophet who has predicted what is found to be true, I have sent him." God seems there to acknowledge as his faithful servants those who foretell what is true. But

[1] It is not the past but the future tense is used here, "The prophet, who shall prophesy of peace," &c.; so the versions, except the *Vulg.* In the former verse Jeremiah speaks of what all the previous prophets had predicted, that is, of war, famine, and pestilence, as to various kingdoms, and Judah no doubt as forming a part of them. Now, in this verse he seems to say, that if a prophet should be found speaking a different language, contrary to that of all former prophets, the event alone, the fulfilment of his prophecy alone could prove him a true prophet. He intimates that as Hananiah said things contrary to all former prophets, he was not to be believed until what he said came to pass. The verse may be thus rendered,—

9. The prophet who shall prophesy (or who prophesies) of peace, when the word of that prophet shall come, he will be known *as* the prophet whom Jehovah hath sent in truth.

The first word, "the prophet," is a nominative case absolute, many instances of which are found in Hebrew.—*Ed.*

Moses had before reminded the people that even impostors sometimes speak the truth, but that they ought not on this account to be believed. But we must remember what God often declares by Isaiah, when he claims to himself alone the foreknowledge of things, "Go," he says, "and inquire whether the gods of the Gentiles will answer as to future things." (Isaiah xliv. 7.) We see that God ascribes to himself alone this peculiarity, that he foreknows future events and testifies respecting them. And surely nothing can be more clear than that God alone can speak of hidden things: men, indeed, can conjecture this or that, but they are often mistaken.

With regard to the devil, I pass by those refined disquisitions with which Augustine especially wearied himself; for above all other things he toiled on this point, how the devils reveal future and hidden things? He speculated, as I have said, in too refined a manner. But the solution of the difficulty, as to the subject now in hand, may be easily given. We first conclude, that future events cannot be known but by God alone, and that, therefore, prescience is his exclusive property, so that nothing that is future or hidden can be predicted but by him alone. But, then, it does not follow that God does not permit liberty to the devil and his ministers to foretell something that is true. How? As the case was with Balaam, who was an impostor, ready to let on hire or to sell his prophecies, as it is well known, and yet he was a prophet. But it was a peculiar gift to foretell things: whence had he this? Not from the devil any farther than it pleased God; and yet the truth had no other fountain than God himself and his Spirit. When, therefore, the devil declares what is true, it is as it were extraneous and adventitious.

Now, as we have said, that God is the source of truth, it follows that the prophets sent by him cannot be mistaken; for they exceed not the limits of their call, and so they do not speak falsely of hidden things; but when they declare this or that, they have him as their teacher. But these terms, as they say, are not convertible—to foretell what is true and to be a true prophet: for some, as I have said, predict what is found afterwards by trial and experience to

be true, and yet they are impostors; nor did God, in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, intend to give a certain definition by which his own prophets are to be distinguished; but as he saw that the Israelites would be too credulous, so as greedily to lay hold on anything that might have been said, he intended to restrain that excess, and to correct that immoderate ardour. Hence he commanded them to expect the event, as though he had said, "If any arise among you who will promise this or that in my name, do not immediately receive what they may announce; but the event will shew whether I have sent them." So also, in this place, Jeremiah says, that the true prophets of God had spoken efficiently, as they had predicted nothing but what God had ratified and really proved to have come from him.

Thus, then, we ought to think of most, that is, that those who predict what is true are for the most part the prophets of God: this is to be taken as the general rule. But we cannot hence conclude, that all those who apparently predict this or that, are sent by God, so that the whole of what they teach is true: for one particular prophecy would not be sufficient to prove the truth of all that is taught and preached. It is enough that God condemns their vanity who speak from their own hearts or from their own brains, when the event does not correspond. At the same time he points out his own prophets by this evidence,—that he really shews that he has sent them, when he fulfils what has been predicted by them. As to false prophets there is a special reason why God permits to them so much liberty, for the world is worthy of such reward, when it willingly offers itself to be deceived. Satan, the father of lies, lays everywhere his snares for men, and they who run into them, and wish to cast themselves on his tenterhooks, deserve to be given up to believe a lie, as they will not, as Paul says, believe the truth. (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.)

We now then see what was the object of Jeremiah: his design was not to prove that all were true prophets who predicted something that was true, for this was not his subject; but he took up another point,—that all who predicted this or that, which was afterwards found to be vain, were

thus convicted of falsehood. If then any one predicted what was to be, and the thing itself came not to pass, it was a sufficient proof of his presumption: it hence appeared, that he was not sent of God as he boasted. This was the object of Jeremiah, nor did he go beyond it; for he did not discuss the point, whether all who predicted true things were sent from above, and whether all their doctrines were to be credited and they believed indiscriminately; this was not the subject handled by Jeremiah; but he shewed that Hananiah was a false prophet, for it would appear evident after two years that he had vainly spoken of what he had not received from God's Spirit. And the same thing Moses had in view, as I have already explained.

As to the *prophets*, who had been in all ages and *prophesied* respecting many lands and great kingdoms, they must be considered as exclusively the true prophets: for though there had been some prophets among heathen nations, yet Jeremiah would not have thought them worthy of so great an honour; and it would have been to blend together sacred and profane things, had he placed these vain foretellers and the true prophets in the same rank. But we know that all God's servants had so directed their discourse to the elect people, as yet to speak of foreign kingdoms and of far countries; and this has not been without reason distinctly expressed; for when they spoke of any monarchy they could not of themselves conjecture what would be: it was therefore necessary for them thus to speak by the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Were I disposed to assume more than what is lawful, and to pretend that I possess some special gift of prophesying, I could more easily lie and deceive, were I to speak only of one city, and of the state of things open before my eyes, than if I extended my predictions to distant countries: when therefore Jeremiah says that the prophets had spoken of divers and large countries, and of most powerful kingdoms, he intimates that their predictions could not have been ascribed to human conjectures; for were any one possessed of the greatest acuteness, and were he to surpass angels in intelligence, he yet could not predict what is hereafter to take place in lands beyond the seas But whatever

had been predicted by the prophets, God sanctioned it by the events of time. It then follows that their call was at the same time sanctioned ; that is, when God as it were ratified from heaven what they had spoken on earth. Whether therefore the prophets spoke of peace, that is, of prosperity, or of war, famine, and pestilence, when experience proved that true which they had said, their own authority was at the same time confirmed, as though God had shewed that they had been sent by him.

We must also notice the word בֶּאֱמֶת, *beamet*, he says that God sent them *in truth*. He condemns here the boldness which impostors ever assume ; for they surpass God's faithful servants in boasting that they have been sent. As then they were thus insolent, and by a fallacious pretence of having been called to their office, deceived unwary men, the Prophet adds here this clause, intimating that they were not all sent in truth. He thus conceded some sort of a call to these unprincipled men, but yet shewed how much they differed from God's servants, whose call was sealed by God himself. It follows—

10. Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.

11. And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

10. Et abstulit Chananias propheta ligamen illud (vinculum) e collo Jeremiæ prophetæ, et confregit illud.

11. Et dixit Chananias in oculis totius populi (*hoc est*, coram toto populo loquutus est,) dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova, In hunc modum confringam jugum Nebuchadnezer, regis Babylonii cum adhuc (*id est* simulac) fuerunt duo anni dierum e collo omnium gentium : et profectus est Jeremias propheta per viam suam.

It was not enough for the impostor to resist the holy servant of God to his face, without laying sacrilegious hands on that visible symbol, by which it had pleased God to testify that the Prophet's message was true. For such was the tardiness of the people, nay, their insensibility, that they could not be much moved by words ; therefore God added a symbol, for Jeremiah carried cords or bands around his neck : and it was a sign of reproach before men, yet, in order to touch the people, he refused not to undergo that reproach.

The band then on the neck of Jeremiah was like a sacrament; for it was a visible sign to establish the credit of his message. And what did Hananiah do? After having insolently inveighed against Jeremiah, and promised deliverance to the people after two years, he violently broke and took off the cord or the band which Jeremiah had around his neck.

We hence see how great and how impetuous is the fury of those whom the devil impels: for when once they arrive at that degree of temerity as to dare to resist the word of God, and, were it possible, to cast him from his own throne, they spare no symbols of his power and glory. We ought especially to notice this madness of Hananiah; for he not only resisted God's servant, and endeavoured to subvert his prophecy, but also snatched away the bands, that he might set up the falsehood of the devil in opposition to the true sacrament. This sign, as we have said, availed to confirm the prophecy of which we have heard; but what was done by Hananiah? he not only took away that sign, but by breaking the bands he attracted the attention of men, and by such a representation made them to believe that there would be in two years a deliverance. Then Hananiah displayed his furious zeal in two ways; for he profaned that symbol which Jeremiah had adopted according to God's command, and he also took it away, as though he aimed to be above God, and to overthrow his truth, and would triumph over it.

The same thing we now see done under the Papacy: for we know that what Christ had commanded has been either corrupted, or obscured, or blotted out by them; and they have also devised fictitious sacraments and innumerable pompous rites, by which they fascinate foolish and credulous men. The same did Hananiah; and therefore his disciples and imitators are the Papists; who not only reject or extenuate the testimonies which have come from God, but plainly dishonour his sacraments by arrogantly bringing forward their own devices and inventions.

We must also notice how craftily this impostor insinuated himself; for he seemed to imitate the true prophets of God, for he set a sign before the people, and then added a doc-

trine. The Papists have their empty signs, but they only delight the eyes, while yet they have no care nor concern for the ears. But Hananiah came, still nearer to God's servants, so that he might deceive even those who were not stupid. What, indeed, could we desire more in this man than that he should set forth a sign? He also added the name of God and declared what was his purpose, *In this manner will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar:* nor did he speak in his own name, but assumed the person of God, *Thus saith Jehovah,* I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar.

But as we have elsewhere said, this preposterous imitation of the devil ought not to disturb pious minds; for God ever supplies his own people with the spirit of discernment, provided they humbly pray to him. And therefore whenever Jeremiah repeated the word prophet, which he conceded to Hananiah, as he assumed it himself, for whenever he spoke of Hananiah, he honoured him with this name, even that he was a prophet,—the holy man was not ignorant what an occasion of offence it was, when a prophet, who is so acknowledged in the Church of God, is yet the minister of Satan, a liar and an impostor. But his object was to warn us in due time, lest novelty should frighten us when any boasts of the title of a prophet. So the Papists brag that they are prelates and bishops, and boast that they are the successors of the Apostles: but the devil is their chief, who calls himself the Vicar of Christ on the earth. Then Jeremiah designedly called Hananiah so many times a prophet, so that our faith, when any such thing happens to us, may not fail, as though some new thing had taken place. I cannot to-day finish the last part of the verse.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou wouldest so try the constancy of our faith as to permit the devil to blend his lies with thy holy truth, we may not yet be entangled in them, but be attentive to that light which thou settest before us, and by which thou guidest us into the way of salvation; and may we in the spirit of docility so offer ourselves to be ruled by thee, that thou mayest also become our faithful and infallible leader, until we shall at length attain that eternal life which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Eighth.

HANANIAH, after having broken the bands of Jeremiah, predicted that God would liberate the Jews as well as other nations from under the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar; and it is at length added, that Jeremiah *went his way;* by which words the Prophet intimates that he left the place, for he was unwilling contentiously to dispute with a violent man, or rather with a wild beast; for it is probable, nay, it may be concluded as certain, that Hananiah had great power in the Temple, for his prophecies were plausible. For as men always seek flatteries, when they heard promised to them what was especially desirable, even an end to all their evils and calamities after two years, all of them greedily received what the impostor had said. Besides, not only his tongue fought against Jeremiah, but also his hands, for he violently assailed the holy man when he broke his bands. Hence Jeremiah could not have acted otherwise than to turn aside as it were from the storm; nor did he do this through fear, but because he saw that his adversary would be his superior in wrangling, nor did he hope to be heard amidst noise and clamours; for he saw that a great tumult would immediately rise if he began to speak. He found it therefore necessary to withdraw from the people.

We are hereby reminded that we ought wisely to consider what occasions may require; for it is not right nor expedient to speak always and everywhere. When, therefore, the Lord opens our mouth, no difficulties ought to restrain us so as not to speak boldly; but when there is no hope of doing good, it is better sometimes to be silent than to excite a great multitude without any profit. True indeed is that saying of Paul, that we ought to be instant out of season, (2 Tim. iv. 2;) but he means, that the ministers of Christ, though they may sometimes offend and exasperate the minds of many, ought not yet to desist but to persevere. But Jeremiah had no hearers, and the whole people were so incensed, that he could do nothing against that impostor even if he exposed himself to death. He therefore was silent, for he

had already discharged the duties of his office; he might have also withdrawn, that he might come furnished with new messages, and thus endued with new authority, as, indeed, it appears from what follows,—

12. Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah *the prophet*, (after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah,) saying,

12. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam, postquam confregit Chananiah propheta jugum (*aut*, vinculum) e collo Jeremiæ prophetæ, dicendo,

13. Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.

13. Vade et loquere cum Chanania, dicendo, (alloquere Chananiam, dicendo,) Sic dicit Jehova, Vincula lignea fregisti; fac autem tibi loco illorum vincula ferrea.

It hence appears that Jeremiah had regard only to the common benefit of the people, and that he wisely kept silence for a time, that he might not throw pearls before swine, and thus expose in a manner the holy name of God to the insolence of the ungodly. He therefore waited until he might again go forth with new messages, and thus secure more credit to himself. For had he contended longer with Hananiah, contentions would have been kindled on every side, there would have been no hearing in a tumult, and the Jews would have wholly disregarded anything he might have then spoken. But as he had withdrawn from the crowd, and was afterwards sent by God, the Jews could not have so presumptuously despised him or his doctrine. This, then, was the reason why he was for a short time silent.

If he feared and trembled in the midst of these commotions, God in due time confirmed him by giving him new commands: *The word of Jehovah*, he says, *came to Jeremiah*, after Hananiah broke the band from his neck. By these words he intimates, that the ungodly, however insolently they may rise up against God, ever depart with shame and reproach. For Hananiah had not only opposed Jeremiah by his words and tongue, but had also broken the cords or bands from his neck. This, then, the Prophet now repeats, in order that he might shew, as it were by his finger, that Hananiah by his audacity gained nothing, except that he rendered his vanity more notorious.

Now it is an abrupt sentence when he says, *Go and speak*

to Hananiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Thou hast broken the wooden bands; but make to thee iron bands; Jeremiah does not keep to the same point; for in the first clause he relates what he had been commanded to say to Hananiah; and in the second he relates what God had commanded him to do, even iron bands. But there is no obscurity as to the meaning; for doubtless the Prophet might have arranged his words thus, "Thou hast broken the bands from my neck; but God has commanded me to make new ones from iron."[1] Though Jeremiah, then, only tells us here that God commanded him to make iron bands, it may yet be easily concluded that when he spoke of wooden bands he at the same time added what he relates of iron bands, but in a different connection. Now follows the explanation,—

14. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

14. Quoniam sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, jugum ferreum imposui super collum omnium gentium istorum, ut serviant Nebuchadnezer, regi Babylonis, et servient ei, atque etiam bestiam agri dedi illi.

It would have been a vain spectacle, had Jeremiah brought only his iron band around his neck; but when he added an explanation of the symbol, he no doubt prevailed on many to believe his prophecy, and rendered those inexcusable who had hardened themselves in their wickedness. But it is worthy of being observed, that God replaced the wooden bands with iron bands; and he did this, because the whole people had through their foolish and wicked consent approved of the madness of that impostor, who had dared to profane that symbol, by which God had testified that he did not speak in vain, but seriously by the mouth of his servant.

A profitable doctrine may be hence elicited,—that the ungodly by barking against God gain nothing, except that

[1] It appears that the true reading has been retained here only by the *Sept.* when the verb "make" is given in the first person; the difference is only the addition of ו; then the sentence would be,—

The yokes of wood thou hast broken,
But I have made for them yokes of iron.

Or if the *vau* be considered conversive, the line would be,—

But I will make for them yokes of iron.

The exigency of a passage is one of our best guides.—*Ed.*

they kindle more and more his wrath, and thus render double their own evils, like a dog, who being ensnared obstinately strives to extricate himself from the snare and to shake it off, and thus strangles himself. In like manner the ungodly, the more they resist God, the heavier judgment they procure for themselves. And, therefore, whenever God declares to us that he is offended with our sins, we ought to take heed, lest while we seek to break the wooden bands, he be preparing and forming for us iron bands. Our condition will ever become worse, unless we humbly deprecate God's wrath as soon as it appears, and also patiently submit to his scourges when he chastises us for our offences. We ought then to bear this in mind as to the wooden and iron bands.

He adds, *Upon the neck of all these nations.* The Jews, as it has been stated, hoped that Nebuchadnezzar could be in a moment driven back beyond the Euphrates, and would be made to surrender other countries which he had occupied; and all the neighbouring nations had conspired, and sent ambassadors here and there; and when the Amorites, the Moabites, and other nations gave encouragement to the Jews, they also in their turn animated others, so that they might all make an assault on the Babylonians. As, then, such a secret conspiracy gave courage to the Jews, this was the reason why the Prophet spoke of other nations. He says, *And they shall serve him.* He had, indeed, already subdued all these countries; but the Prophet means, that the domination of the king of Babylon would continue, though Hananiah had said, that it would stand only for two years. Continuance, then, is set in opposition to a short time, as though the Prophet had said, "Let, indeed, the nations chafe and fret, but they shall abide under the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar, and in vain shall they attempt to extricate themselves, for God has delivered them up to bondage."

This servitude may at the same time be explained in another way; the condition of these nations was bearable, as long as Nebuchadnezzar ordered tribute to be paid; and when he sent his prefects, the object was no other than to retain possession; but when he found that they could not be otherwise subdued than by a harder servitude, he began

to exercise great tyranny, though he had been before an endurable master. The same thing may be also said of the Jews; for we know that they had been tributaries to the king of Babylon; and as he had spared them, his humanity might have been deemed a sort of liberty; but when he found that a hard wood could not be split but by a hard wedge, he began more violently to oppress them. Then that servitude began which is now mentioned. The Jews, therefore, began then really to serve the king of Babylon, when he saw that they would not endure that bearable yoke which he had laid on them, but in their obstinacy and pride ever struggled against it.

The Prophet adds, *The beast of the field have I also given him.* By these words he indirectly upbraids the Jews, as we have before reminded you, with their perverseness, because they perceived not that it was the righteous judgment of God, that Nebuchadnezzar imposed laws on them as a conqueror; for they would have been defended by a celestial aid, as it is said by Moses, had they not deprived themselves of it. (Deut. xxix. 25.) As, then, they had long rejected the protection of God, hence it was that Nebuchadnezzar invaded their country and conquered them. As they now continued to bite and champ their bridle, the Prophet exposes their madness; for they did not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, while wild beasts, void of reason and understanding, perceived that it happened through God's secret and wonderful providence, that Nebuchadnezzar took possession of these lands. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet expressly mentioned wild beasts, as though he said, that the Jews were so refractory, that there was in them less reason, humility, and solicitude than in lions, bears, and animals of the like kind; for through the secret impulse of God the wild beasts submitted to the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar, while the Jews became more and more insolent. It was the highest madness not to acknowledge God's judgment, while this was done by wild and savage animals. It follows,—

15. Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet,

15. Et dixit Jeremias propheta Chananiæ prophetæ, Audi agedum

Hear now, Hananiah; The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.	Chanania, non misit te Jehova, et tu confidere fecisti populum hunc super mendacio (*vel*, in mendacio.)

There would not have been weight enough in the plain teaching of Jeremiah had he not confronted his adversary, as the case is at this day with us; when insolent and unprincipled men rise up and dare to vomit forth their blasphemies, by which they darken and degrade the doctrines of true religion, we are under the necessity to contend with them, otherwise what we teach would be ineffectual; for the minds of many, I mean the simple, are in suspense and fluctuate when they see a great conflict between two contrary parties. It was therefore necessary for the holy man to expose the lies of Hananiah, for he ever vaunted himself and boasted of his own predictions.

But what did Jeremiah say? *Jehovah hath not sent thee.* This refutation ought to be noticed whenever we contend with Satan's ministers and false teachers; for whatever they may pretend, and with whatever masks they may cover their lies, this one thing ought to be more than sufficient to put an end to their boastings,—that they have not been sent by the Lord. Jeremiah might have contended in a long speech with Hananiah, for he might have been made sufficiently eloquent through the Holy Spirit suggesting and dictating whatever was needful on the subject; but this concise brevity produced much greater effect than if he had made great display and used many words. Let this, then, be borne in mind, that wherever there is a controversy about religion, we ought ever to ask whether he who speaks has been sent by God; for whatever he may babble, though the most acute, and though he may talk things which may fill with wonder the minds of the simple, yet all this is nothing but smoke when his doctrine is not from God. So also we ought at this day to deal in a brief manner with those mercenary dogs of the Pope who bark against the pure truth of the Gospel; we ought to be satisfied with this compendious answer,—that God is not their master and teacher. But as our state now is different from that of the ancient people, we must observe that sent by the Lord is he only whose

doctrine is according to the rule of the Law, and of the Prophets, and of the Gospel. If, then, we desire to know whom the Lord has sent, and whom he approves as his servants, let us come to thé Scripture, and let there be a thorough examination; he who speaks according to the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, has a sure and an indubitable evidence of his divine call; but he who cannot prove that he draws what he advances from these fountains, whatever his pretences may be, ought to be repudiated as a false prophet. We hence see what an important instruction this passage contains.

He then adds, *Thou hast made this people to rely on falsehood.* They pervert the meaning of the Prophet who thus render the words, "Thou hast falsely rendered this people secure," at least they lessen by one half what the Prophet intended to express; for not only is Hananiah condemned because he vainly and falsely pretended God's name, but the word שִׁקֶּר, *shicor*, is introduced, the very thing employed; as though he had said, "Thou feedest this people with a vain hope which thou hast formed in thine own brains; therefore thy fictions make this people to go astray." Hence Jeremiah not only accused this impostor that he by his fictions deceived the people, but also that he brought forward his prophecies in God's name; and these removed their fear and gave them some hope, so that the people became torpid in their security.

Let us learn from this passage that we ought especially to take heed when the ground of trust is the subject, lest we rely on any empty or perishable thing, like wretched hypocrites who devour shadows only, and afterwards find nothing solid in their own fictions. But when we refer to trust, let there be something solid on which we can safely rely; and we know that we cannot possibly be disappointed, if we look to God for all things, if we recumb on his mercy alone; for there is no rest nor peace for us anywhere else but in Christ. Let us then retain this object of trust, and let it be our only support. It follows,—

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will

16. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego emitto te (*hoc est*, projicio) e superficie terræ

cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.

hujus (*vel*, terræ; *potius indefinite accipitur hoc loco pro tota terra: videtur* הַשָּׁנָה *quidem paulo post notare certum annum; sed in voce* הָאֲדָמָה *puto exprimi specialiter Judeam, imo potius totum orbem, atque hoc facile colligitur, quia denunciat Jeremias sublatum iri Chananiam e medio, et non fore amplius superstitem mundo:*) morieris, *ergo*, hoc anno, quia defectionem loquutus es contra Jehovam.

Here is added the punishment which confirmed the prophecy of Jeremiah; for it was God's purpose to have regard to the ignorance of many who would have otherwise stumbled, or made their ignorance a pretext, for they could not determine which of the two had been sent by God, Hananiah or Jeremiah. It was then God's design, in his paternal indulgence, to stretch forth his hand to them, and also in an especial manner to render inexcusable the unbelieving who had already given themselves up, as it were, to the devil; for the greater part were not moved by an event so memorable;[1] for it follows immediately,—

17. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month.

17. Et mortuus est Chananias propheta anno illo, mense septimo.

All those who had disregarded Jeremiah saw, in a manner, before their eyes the judgment of God. No surer confirmation could have been expected by the Jews, had they a particle of understanding, than to see the impostor slain by

[1] The last clause of this verse is not here explained. *Calvin's* version is, "revolt hast thou spoken against Jehovah;" the *Vulg.*, "against the Lord hast thou spoken;" the *Syr.*, "iniquity hast thou spoken before the Lord;" and the *Targ.*, "perverseness hast thou spoken before Jehovah." *Blayney's* version is, "thou hast spoken prevarication concerning Jehovah." *Gataker* renders it the same with *Calvin*, and explains it thus,—"Because by thy lying tales thou hast heartened and encouraged men to stand out against God's word, and against his admonitions and menaces by his prophets." *Henry* gives the same view.

Blayney says that סָרָה properly signifies *declining* or turning aside from the straight path, the path of truth and right, and that here it means the presumption of uttering as a revelation from God what a man knew to be not so. The same phrase occurs in two other places, Deut. xiii. 5; Jer. xxix. 32. The אֶל here before Jehovah is עַל in several MSS.; but the prepositions are sometimes the same. The rendering that would suit the three places would be the following:—"For of turning aside hast thou spoken contrary to Jehovah," that is, to his expressed will or command. The meaning might be thus conveyed,—"for thou hast encouraged disobedience contrary to the express command of God."—*Ed.*

the word of Jeremiah alone; for he never touched him with a finger, nor caused him to be led to punishment, though he deserved this; but he drove him out of the world by the mere sound of his tongue. As, then, the word of the holy Prophet had a celestial and divine power, as though God himself had fulminated from heaven, or with an armed hand had slain that ungodly man, how great was their blindness not to be moved! However, they were not moved; hence some of the Rabbins, wishing to conceal, as their manner is, the reproach of their own nation, imagine that the disciples of Hananiah secretly took away his body, and that then the people knew nothing of his death. But what need is there of such an evasion as this? for Jeremiah says no such thing, but speaks of the event as well known; it was indeed a sure testimony of his own call. It hence follows that it was not unknown to the Jews; and yet the devil had so blinded the greatest part of them, that they paid no more attention to the holy man than before; on the contrary, they wholly disregarded those threatenings of which he had been the witness and herald.

But how does this appear? the greatest part of the people often rose up against him as though he was the most wicked of men; he was accused as the betrayer of his country, and hardly escaped, through the clemency of a cruel king, when he was cast into a dungeon as one half-dead. Since, then, the Jews thus pertinaciously raged, we hence understand what the Prophet so often threatened them with, even with the spirit of giddiness, and of fury, and of madness, and of stupor, and of drunkenness. Moreover, it was needful for that small portion which was not wholly irreclaimable to be restored to the right way; and this was done by this manifest proof of Jeremiah's call. It was also necessary on the other hand that the unbelieving should be more restrained, so that they might be condemned by their own conscience, as Paul calls heretics self-condemned who were become fixed in their own perverseness, and had willingly and designedly sold themselves as slaves to the devil.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou dost kindly and graciously invite us to repentance, we may be so touched by the sense of thy wrath, that we may not by our perverseness increase more and more the heinousness of thy vengeance against us, but lay hold on the mercy that is offered to us, so that we may experience the efficacy and fruit of thy truth for our salvation, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Ninth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

1. Hi sunt sermones libri (*vel*, epistolæ) quem misit Jeremias propheta Jerusalem ad reliquias seniorum captivitatis, et ad sacerdotes et ad prophetas, et ad universum populum, quem captivum abduxerat Nebuchadnezer e Jerusalem in Babylonem;

Here the Prophet begins a new discourse, even that he not only cried out constantly at Jerusalem, that the Jews who still remained there should repent, but that he also mitigated the grief of the exiles, and exhorted them to entertain the hope of returning, provided they patiently endured the chastisement allotted to them. The design of the Prophet was at the same time twofold; for he not only intended to mitigate by comfort the sorrow of the exiles, but designed also to break down the obstinacy of his own nation, so that they who still remained at Jerusalem and in Judea might know that nothing would be better for them than to join themselves to their other brethren. The Jews, as it has already appeared, and as we shall hereafter in many places see, had set their minds on an unreasonable deliverance; God had fixed on seventy years, but they wished immediately to break through and extricate themselves from the yoke laid on them. Hence Jeremiah, in writing to the captives and exiles, intended to accommodate

what he said to the Jews who still remained at Jerusalem, and who thought their case very fortunate, because they were not driven away with their king and the rest of the multitude. But at the same time his object was to benefit also the miserable exiles, who might have been overwhelmed with despair, had not their grief been in some measure mitigated. The Prophet, as we shall see, bids them to look forward to the end of their captivity, and in the meantime exhorts them to patience, and desires them to be quiet and peaceable, and not to raise tumults, until the hand of God was put forth for their deliverance.

He says that he *wrote a book*[1] to the remaining *elders*,[2] for many of that age had died; as nature requires, the old who approach near the goal of life, die first. He then says that he *wrote* to them who still remained alive. We hence conclude that his prophecy was designed for them all; and yet he afterwards says, "Take wives and propagate;" but this, as we shall see, is to be confined to those who were at that time in a fit age for marriage. He did not however wish to exclude the aged from the comfort of which God designed them to be partakers, and that by knowing that there would be a happy end to their captivity, provided they retained resignation of mind and patiently bore the punishment of God justly due to them for having so often and in such various ways provoked him. Then he adds, *the priests*, and the *prophets*, and then the *whole* people.[3]

But we must notice that he not only exhorts the people to patience, but also the priests and the prophets. And though,

[1] So it is rendered by the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and *Targ.*; but "epistle," or letter, by the *Syr.* The word properly means a narrative; but as that is included in a book or in a letter, it is often used for both. It is rendered "book" in our version in Ex. xxiv. 7; and "letter" in 2 Sam. xi. 14.—*Ed.*

[2] Rather, "old men;" literally it is, "to the remainder of the aged of the transmigration." Age, and not authority, seems to be intended, though *Grotius* thinks they were the members of the Sanhedrim. The word commonly rendered "captivity," and when a verb, "to lead captive," means properly to be removed, to migrate, and transitively, to remove, to carry away, to transfer, to translate. The idea of captivity is not included in it, though sometimes implied.—*Ed.*

[3] Here in the original ends the preceding Lecture; but as this chapter has no connection with the foregoing, the prayer which occurs here has been removed to the end of the last chapter.—*Ed.*

as we shall hereafter see, there were among them impostors, who falsely boasted that they were prophets,[1] it is yet probable that they are also included here who were endued with God's Spirit, either because the spirit was languid in them, or because God did not always grant to them the knowledge of everything. It might then be that the prophets, to whom God had not made known this, or whose minds were oppressed with evils, were to be taught.

As to the priests, we hence conclude that they had from the beginning neglected their office, for they would have been God's prophets, had they faithfully performed their sacerdotal office; and it was, as it were, an extraordinary thing when God chose other prophets, and not without reproach to the priests; for they must have become degenerated and idle or deceptive, when they gloried in the name alone, when they were destitute of the truth. This then was the reason why they were to be taught in common with the people. It now follows,—

2. After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;

2. Postquam egressus fuerat Jechaniah rex et domina (*id est*, regina, *mater ejus*,) et proceres, principes Jehudah et Jerusalem, et artifex et sculptor ex Jerusalem;

He mentions the time when the book was sent, even after the calamity which had happened, when King Jeconiah and his mother were driven into exile, and Zedekiah, his successor, was made governor in his place, as we shall presently see. It was then during these beginnings of a change that Jeremiah wrote. All things were then in such a ferment, that some feared more than what was necessary, and others entertained vain hopes, as the case usually is in a disordered state of things. It was then after this fresh calamity that Jeremiah wrote, as his words most especially shew. He might indeed, as in other instances, have mentioned the year; but as he plainly declares that this happened after the departure of Jeconiah, his purpose is sufficiently evident,

[1] The *Targ.* has "scribes;" the *Sept.* and *Syr.*, "false prophets;" and the *Vulg.*, "prophets." They were probably teachers, and not those higher prophets who were favoured with visions, and sent forth by God to deliver special messages.—*Ed.*

even that he wished in due time to give some relief to their sorrow, who might have succumbed under it, had not God in a manner stretched forth his hand to them. For we know that fresh grief is difficult to be borne; and hence it is that it is called a bitter grief; for it was a grievous novelty, when they were violently and suddenly dragged out of their quiet nests. It was then Jeremiah's object at that time to give them some comfort; he also saw that those who were left in Judea were greatly disturbed and continually agitating new schemes; for Zedekiah's kingdom was not as yet established, and they despised him and were ever looking for their own king. As, then, things were thus in disorder at home, and as the miserable exiles especially, were at first very grievously afflicted, Jeremiah set before them a seasonable remedy. This then is the reason why he points out the time.

The mother of Jeconiah, we know, was led away with him into captivity; and she is called הגבירה, *egebire*;[1] for though she was not properly the queen, she yet ruled in connection with her son. Some render סריסים, *sarisim*, eunuchs;[2] but I prefer the word "chiefs;" and hence is added the word שרי, *shari*, princes, that is, the courtiers, who governed the people, not only in Jerusalem, but through the whole of Judea. He also adds the *artificers* and *sculptors*,[3] for Nebuchadnezzar had chosen the best of them; he had deprived the city of its nobles, that there might be none of authority among the Jews to venture on any new attempt; and then he had taken away those who were useful and ingenious, so that he left them no sculptors nor artificers. It now follows,—

3. By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king

3. Per manum Eleasah filii Saphan et Gamariæ filii Helchiæ, quos miserat Zedechias rex Jehudah ad

[1] Rendered "governess" or lady—"domina," by the *Vulg.*; but "queen" by the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.* It was a title most commonly given to the queen-mother.—*Ed.*

[2] The Versions have "eunuchs," but the *Targ.*, "princes." The word means an officer or an attendant on a sovereign. It is rendered "officer" in Gen. xxxvii. 36; and "chamberlain" in Esth. ii. 3. That such officers were often eunuchs there can be no doubt, but the word does not designate such a thing.—*Ed.*

[3] See a note in p. 219.

of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,) saying,

4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;

5. Build ye houses, and dwell *in them;* and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;

6. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

Nebuchadnezer regem Babylonis Babylonem, dicendo,

4. Sic dicit Jehovah exercituum, Deus Israel, universæ captivitati quam captivam adduxi e Jerusalem Babylonem,

5. Ædificate domos, et inhabitate; plantate hortos, et comedite fructus eorum;

6. Accipite uxores et generate filios et filias; et accipite filiis vestris uxores, et filias vestras date nuptum viris, ut generent filios et filias; et crescite (*aut,* multiplicamini) illic, et ne minuamini.

This is the substance of the message, which the Prophet, no doubt, explained to them at large; but here he touches but briefly on what he wrote to the captives, even that they were patiently to endure their exile until the time of their deliverance, which was not to be such as many imagined, but such as God had fixed. Well known indeed at that time was Jeremiah's prophecy, not only in Judea, but also to the captives, that their exile could not be completed in a shorter time than seventy years.

It is said that he sent his *letter* by the hand of the king's ambassadors. It is probable that this was done by the permission of Zedekiah; for there is no doubt but that in sending his ambassadors he intended to obtain favour with King Nebuchadnezzar, by whose nod he had come to the throne; for he was not of such dignity as to be made king, though of the royal seed, had not Nebuchadnezzar thought that it would be more advantageous to himself. For had he appointed any other governor over the Jews, a sedition might have been easily raised; he therefore intended in a measure to pacify them, for he knew that they were a very refractory people. However, Zedekiah ruled only by permission, not through his own power, nor on account of his wealth, but through the good pleasure of a conqueror. He then sent his ambassadors to promise all kinds of homage, and to know what was to be done in future. As, then, he did not wish the return of Jeconiah, he permitted his ambassa-

dors to carry the letter of Jeremiah, not indeed that he wished to obey God. It was not, then, owing to any sincere regard for religion, but because he thought that it would be advantageous to him, that the Jews should remain in Chaldea till the death of Jeconiah; for he thus hoped that his kingdom would be confirmed, for Jeconiah was, as it were, his rival. Nor is there a doubt, but that Nebuchadnezzar wished to hold Zedekiah bound by this fetter; for he could any day restore Jeconiah, who was his captive, to his former state.

Now, then, we understand why Zedekiah did not prohibit Jeremiah's letter to be carried to the captives: he thought that it would serve to tranquillize his kingdom. But the holy Prophet had another thing in view; for his anxious object was, not to gain the favour of the king, but to shew, as God had commanded him, how long the captivity would be. Zedekiah indeed might have wished that a permission should be given to the exiles to return; for those who remained in Judea were only the dregs and offscourings of society; it was not an honourable state of things: and it may be that he had also this in view, in sending ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar, that Jerusalem might not remain desolate, but that a portion at least of the exiles might return, and that there might also be some to cultivate the land which had been nearly stripped of its inhabitants. But Jeremiah declared what he knew was by no means acceptable to the king, that a return was in vain expected before the termination of seventy years. We hence see that he spoke nothing to gain the favour of the king; and yet the king did not regard with displeasure, that the letter was sent to allay all commotions, and to restrain all the violence of those who would have been otherwise too prone to make some new attempts. This accounts for the circumstance, that the letter was sent by the hand of *Elasah* and *Gemariah*.

He adds, at the same time, that they were sent by *Zedekiah* to *Babylon*, that is, to gain the favour of King Nebuchadnezzar, or, at least, to secure his friendship. I now come to the message itself:

God commanded the captives to *build houses* in Chaldea, to *plant vineyards*, and also to *marry wives*, and to *beget children*, as though they were at home. It was not, indeed, God's purpose that they should set their hearts on Chaldea, on the contrary, they were ever to think of their return: but until the end of the seventy years, it was God's will that they should continue quiet, and not attempt this or that, but carry on the business of life as though they were in their own country. As to their hope, then, it was God's will that their minds should be in a state of suspense until the time of deliverance.

At the first view these two things seemed inconsistent,—that the Jews were to live seventy years as though they were the natives of the place, and that their habitations were not to be changed,—and yet that they were ever to look forward to a return. But these two things can well agree together: it was a proof of obedience when they acknowledged that they were chastised by God's hand, and thus became willingly submissive to the end of the seventy years. But their hope, as I have just observed, was to remain in suspense, in order that they might not be agitated with discontent, nor be led away by some violent feeling, but that they might so pass their time as to bear their exile in such a way as to please God; for there was a sure hope of return, provided they looked forward, according to God's will, to the end of the seventy years. It is then this subject on which Jeremiah now speaks, when he says, *Build houses, and dwell in them; plant vineyards, and eat of their fruit.* For this whole discourse is to be referred to the time of exile, he having beforehand spoken of their return; and this we shall see in its proper place.

But the Jews could not have hoped for anything good, except they were so resigned as to bear their correction, and thus really proved that they did not reject the punishment laid on them.

We now see that Jeremiah did not encourage the Jews to indulge in pleasures, nor persuade them to settle for ever in Chaldea. It was, indeed, a fertile and pleasant land; but he did not encourage them to live there in pleasure, to in-

dulge themselves and to forget their own country; by no means: but he confined what he said to the time of the captivity, to the end of the seventy years. During that time, then, he wished them to enjoy the land of Chaldea, and all its advantages, as though they were not exiles but natives of the place. For what purpose? not that they might give themselves up to sloth, but that they might not, by raising commotions, offend God, and in a manner close up against themselves the door of his grace, for the time which he had fixed was to be expected. For when we are driven headlong by a vehement desire, we in a manner repel the favour of God; we do not then suffer him to act as it becomes him: and when we take away from him his own rights and will, it is the same as though we were unwilling to receive his grace. This would have been the case, had they not quietly and resignedly endured their calamity in Chaldea to the end of the time which had been fixed by God.

We now perceive that the Prophet's message referred only to the time of exile; and we also perceive what was the design of it, even to render them obedient to God, that they might thus shew by their patience that they were really penitent, and that they also expected a return in no other way than through God's favour alone.

In bidding them to *take wives* for their sons, and to *give* their *daughters* in marriage, he speaks according to the usual order of nature; for it would be altogether unreasonable for young men and young women to seek partners for themselves, according to their own humour and fancy. God then speaks here according to the common order of things, when he bids young men not to be otherwise joined in marriage than by the consent of parents, and that young women are not to marry but those to whom they are given.

He then adds, *Be ye multiplied there and not diminished;* as though he had said, that the time of exile would be so long, that except they propagated, they would soon come to nothing: and God expressed this, because it was not his will that Abraham's seed should fail. It was indeed a kind of death, when he had driven them so far, as though he h deprived them of the inheritance which he had prom

be perpetual: he, however, administers comfort here by commanding them to propagate their kind: for they could not have been encouraged to do so, except they had their eyes directed to the hope of a return. He then afforded them some taste of his mercy when he bade them not to be *diminished* in Chaldea. He then adds,—

7. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

7. Et quærite pacem urbis ad quam transtuli vos illuc (*sed abundat*), et orate pro ea Jehovam, quia in pace ejus erit vobis pax.

Jeremiah goes still farther, even that the Jews had been led to Babylon, on the condition of rendering willing obedience to the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar, and of testifying this by their prayers. He not only bids them patiently to endure the punishment laid on them, but also to be faithful subjects of their conqueror; he not only forbids them to be seditious, but he would have them to obey from the heart, so that God might be a witness of their willing subjection and obedience.

He says, *Seek the peace of the city;* this may be understood of prayers; for דרשׁ, *daresh*, often means to pray: but it may suitably be taken here, as I think, in reference to the conduct of the people, as though he had said, that the Jews were to do what they could, to exert themselves to the utmost, so that no harm might happen to the Chaldean monarchy; for they are afterwards directed to *pray*. It may indeed be, that the same thing is repeated in other words; but if any one weighs the subject more fully, he will, I think, assent to what I have stated, that in the first clause the Prophet bids them to be faithful to King Nebuchadnezzar and to his monarchy. *Seek*, then, *the peace of the city*:[1] by peace, as it is well known, is to be understood prosperity.

[1] To "seek the peace of the city" was, no doubt, to promote it by their efforts, to be careful in preserving it. To "seek the land," in Deut. xi. 12, was to care for it; "not to seek the day," in Job iii. 4, was not to regard it. Hence, to "seek the peace of the city," was to care for, or regard it, so as to do everything to promote it. It is said of Mordecai that he was "seeking the wealth (rather, the good) of his people." (Esth. x. 3.) His whole conduct was a proof of this. To "seek one's hurt," as in Psalm xxxviii. 12, was not to pray for it, but to use all means to effect it. Therefore the first sense given by *Calvin* is the right one.—*Ed.*

But he was not satisfied with external efforts, but he would have them to *pray* to God, that all things might turn out prosperously and happily to the Babylonian king, even to the end of their exile; for we must bear in mind that the Prophet had ever that time in view. We hence learn that he exhorted the exiles to bear the yoke of the king of Babylon, during the time allotted to the captivity, for to attempt anything rashly was to fight against God, and that he thus far commanded them quietly to bear that tyrannical government.

He repeats again what he had said, (though I had passed it by,) that they had been *carried away captives:* for he had spoken of it, "all the captivity which," he says, "I made to migrate," or removed, or led captive, "from Jerusalem." Now, again, he repeats the same thing, that he had *carried them away captives,* אשר הגליתי, *asher egeliti;*[1] and he said this, that they might not regard only the avarice, or the ambition, or the pride of King Nebuchadnezzar, but that they might raise up their eyes to heaven, and acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar as the scourge of God, and their exile as a chastisement for their sins. God thus testified that he was the author of their exile, that the Jews might not think that they had to do with a mortal man, but on the contrary, understand that they were kicking against the goad, if they murmured and complained, because they lived under the tyranny of a foreign king. That they might not then be agitated with vain thoughts, God comes forth and says, that the exile was imposed on them by his just judgment, in order that they might know that they would gain nothing by their perverseness, and that they might not be disturbed by an anxious disquietude, nor dare to attempt anything new, for this would be to resist God, and as it were to carry on war with heaven. I will finish here.

[1] It is literally, "whom I have removed," or transplanted; "moved from home," is the *Sept.;* "transferred," the *Vulg.;* "made to migrate," the *Targ.*—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that we may be more and more habituated to render obedience to thee, and that whenever thou chastisest us with thy scourges, we may examine our own consciences, and humbly and suppliantly deprecate thy wrath, and never doubt but thou wilt be propitious to us, after having chastised us with thy paternal hand; and may we thus recumb on thy fatherly kindness, that we may ever look forward with quiet minds, until the end appears, which thou hast promised to us, and that when the warfare of this present life shall be finished, we may reach that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Tenth.

In the last Lecture we did not finish the seventh verse, in which the Prophet says that the Jews, as long as God would have them to be exiles, were to be so fixed in Babylon, that they ought to have deemed their union such, as though they were of the same body. For by saying that *their peace* would be in the *peace* of Babylon, he intimates that they could not be considered as a separate people until the time of seventy years was completed. He therefore commanded them to *pray* for the prosperity of Babylon.

At the first view this may seem hard; for we know how cruelly that miserable people had been treated by the Chaldeans. Then to pray for the most savage enemies, might have appeared unreasonable and by no means suitable. But the Prophet mitigates the hardness of the work by saying, that it would be profitable to them to pray for the happy condition of Babylon, inasmuch as they were the associates of their fortune. We know how much the prospect of what is profitable avails to persuade us, as we think not of undertaking anything except what we deem will be successful. For this reason then the Prophet teaches the Jews that they ought not to refuse what was required from them, when God bade them to pray for Babylon, because the prosperity of that kingdom would be for their benefit. He intimates also, as I have already hinted, that they were so connected with

Babylon, that they could not expect to be exempt from all trouble and annoyance, if any adversity happened to Babylon, for they were of the same body. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

But we may hence deduce a very useful doctrine,—that we ought not only to obey the kings under whose authority we live, but that we ought also to pray for their prosperity, so that God may be a witness of our voluntary subjection. For if it was the duty of the Jews to pray for the wellbeing of the Chaldeans for this reason, because they were for a certain time under their authority, there is no excuse for us, when we live under any legitimate prince, and that not only for a few days, unless we testify our voluntary submission before God; and he who prays to God for the happy state of the country in which he lives, will not surely neglect his other duties.[1] The principal thing indeed is to testify before God what our feeling is; and then other things must be added, such as promptitude to perform all duties of obedience and everything of the like kind. It now follows,—

8. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your prophets and your diviners, that *be* in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

8. Quoniam sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ne decipiant vos prophetæ vestri, qui sunt in medio vestri, et divini vestri; et ne attendatis ad somnia vestra, quæ vos somniatis.

As the minds of almost all were taken up, as we have seen, with that vain and false confidence which they had imbibed from false prophecies, that they should return after two years, the Prophet gives this answer, and reminds them to beware of such impostures. And thus we see that it is not sufficient for one simply to teach what is right, except he also restores from error those who have been already deceived or are in danger of being deceived. For to assert the truth is only one-half of the office of teaching, because Satan ever leads his ministers to corrupt the pure doctrine with falsehoods. It is not then enough to proclaim the truth itself, except all the fallacies of the devil be also dissipated, of which there

[1] "To pray for the peace of a city or country, and for the health or eternal salvation of rulers, is very different from wishing success to their ambitious, rapacious, or sanguinary undertakings; though this distinction is not generally attended to."—*Scott.*

is at this day a manifest instance under the Papacy; for as the minds of almost all are there inebriated with many corrupt inventions, were any one only to shew that this or that is right, he would certainly never in this way eradicate errors from the hearts of men. And hence Paul bids bishops not only to be furnished with doctrine in order to shew the right way to the teachable, but also to be so armed as to be able to resist adversaries and to close their mouths. (Tit. i. 9.)

Inasmuch then as from the beginning of the world Satan has never ceased to try and attempt, as far as he could, to corrupt the truth of God, or to immerse it in darkness, it has hence been always necessary for God's servants to be prepared to do these two things—faithfully to teach the meek and humble,—and boldly to oppose the enemies of truth and break down their insolence. This is the rule which the Prophet now follows; he had exhorted the Jews to bear patiently the tyranny to which they were subject, because it was God's yoke; but as on the other hand the false prophets boasted that there would be a return in two years, it was necessary for him to oppose them; on this point then he now speaks.

And that what he was going to say might have more weight, he speaks again in God's name, *Let not your prophets who are in the midst of you deceive you.* For while Jeremiah had many adversaries at Jerusalem, the devil was also deceiving the miserable exiles in Chaldea. He then warns them not to believe these impostors; and though by way of concession he calls them prophets who were wholly unworthy of so honourable a name, he yet by way of reproach gives them afterwards the name of *diviners.* Then the first name refers to that outward profession in which they gloried, when they boasted that they were sent by God and brought his commands. He then conceded to them the name of prophets, but improperly, or as they say, catachristically; as the case is at this day; for we do not always fight about names, but we call those priests, bishops or prelates, who are so brutal that they ought not to be classed among men. In like manner, as it has already often appeared, the prophets spoke freely, and never hesitated to call those prophets who had

already gained some estimation among the people. But that they might not be proud of such fallacious boasting, he afterwards designated them by another name; he called them *diviners*, and then *dreamers;* and afterwards he adds, *Attend not to your dreams.* He addresses here the whole people; and there were a few who, under the colour and pretence of having a prophetic spirit, announced prophecies.

But Jeremiah did not without reason transfer to the whole people what belonged to a few; for we know that the devil's ministers are cherished not only through the foolish credulity of men, but also through a depraved appetite. For the world is never deceived but willingly, and men, as though they were given up to their own destruction, seek for themselves falsehoods in every direction, and though unwilling to be deceived, they yet for the most part seek to be deceived. Were any one to ask, does the world wish to be deceived? all would cry out, from the least to the greatest, that they shun and fear nothing so much; and yet whence is it that as soon as Satan gives any sign, he attracts vast multitudes, except that we are by nature prone to what is false and vain? Then there is another evil, that we prefer darkness to light. Jeremiah then did no wrong to the people by telling them to beware of the dreams which they dreamt.

Some indeed take מחלמים, *mechelmim*, in a transitive sense, as it is in *Hiphil*, and ought to have been written here מחלימים, *mechelimim;* but it may be taken in the neuter gender.[1]

However this may be, the meaning of the Prophet is not ambiguous; for he imputes this to all the Jews, that they were deceived by vain dreams, and that the fault could not be confined to a few impostors, for it was an evil common to

[1] All the ancient versions, and the *Targ.* too, render this clause, "Your dreams which ye dream." To dream a dream is a common phraseology in Hebrew. There is no instance of the noun here for dreams, in which it means dreamers, as *Blayney* renders it; the marginal reading in our version in chap. xxvii. 9, is no doubt correct, as the word is in every other passage rendered "dreams;" and the word is in another form when it means "dreamers," see Ps. cxxvi. 1. The last word is not found but here in the Hiphil form; but this form has not invariably a causative meaning, nor does it seem to have it here. Then the clause would be, "neither attend to your dreams which you are dreaming."— *Ed.*

them all. And the pronoun הֵמָּה *hemmah*, is emphatical, *ye*, he says, *dream*; for he sets these false dreams in opposition to prophecies. We know that God formerly revealed his will either by visions or by dreams. There were then dreams, which were divine, of which God was the author. But he shews here that the people devised all these impostures for themselves, so that it availed them nothing to pretend that they were prophets, the interpreters of God, and that they announced what they had received by dreams: for what makes the difference is, whether one dreams from his own brain, or whether God reveals to him in a dream what ought to be deemed oracular. We now then understand the design of the Prophet. It follows.—

9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.

9. Quoniam falliditer (*vel*, in mendacio) ipsi prophetant vobis in nomine meo; non misi eos, dicit Jehova.

He confirms what he had said by this reason, that they ran without being called, according to what we found in chap. xxiii. 21. He then repudiates these false prophets, for they spoke not from the mouth of God. But the difference was rendered very obscure and indistinct, when they pompously alleged the name of God and professed that they brought forward nothing but what they had learnt from him; yet as we have elsewhere said, no one can be deceived except willingly and knowingly; for God never leaves his faithful people destitute of the spirit of discernment, provided they offer themselves cordially and sincerely to be taught by his true and legitimate servants. And then the Jews ought to have examined all the doctrines and all the prophecies by the rule of the Law. But if the Law was difficult to be understood, they ought, as I have said, to have sought of God the spirit of wisdom and discernment.

Jeremiah then did not without reason reject whatever the false prophets boasted of, for the purpose of gaining the approbation and applause of the people; for they were not sent nor approved by God. So also at this day, every one who wishes to distinguish with certainty between various doctrines, by which the world is agitated, nay, shaken, can without difficulty attain his object, provided he offers himself

as a scholar to Christ, and connects the Law and the Prophets with the Gospel, and makes use of this rule to prove all doctrines; and provided in the meantime he trusts not to his own acumen, but submits himself to God and seeks of him the spirit of judgment and discrimination. It ought also to be observed, that in the same way the false prophets can be abundantly exposed when we thus shew that they are not sent by God; and we further convince them of vanity, when we prove their doctrine to be inconsistent with the Law and the Gospel.

However this may be, this principle ought to be held, that none ought to be attended to, but those who can shew that they bring messages from God and are furnished with his word. We have said elsewhere, that in order that any one may be accounted as sent by God, it is necessary, first, that he should be rightly called, and secondly, that he should faithfully execute his office; for whosoever thrusts in himself without the command of God, though he may speak what is true and holy, he yet deserves not the name of a Prophet or teacher; and then vocation itself will not be sufficient, except there be faithfulness and integrity. But what Jeremiah mainly insists on here is, that those who promised the people a return in a short time did not speak from the mouth of God: *They prophesy falsely,* he says, *in my name;* how? *because I have not sent them.* It follows,—

10. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

10. Quia sic dicit Jehova, secundum mensuram (*nam* מלאת *accipitur metaphorice pro mensura; sed adhuc aspera esset loquutio, ideo simplicius vertendum est,* quia ubi impleti fuerint) in Babylone septuaginta anni, visitabo vos, et suscitabo super vos sermonem meum bonum, ut reducam vos ad locum hunc.

In order to expose the dreams by which the false prophets had inebriated the people, he again repeats what he had said, that the end of their exile could not be expected until the end of seventy years. And this way of teaching ought to be particularly observed, for the truth of God will ever avail to dissipate all the mists in which Satan never ceases to envelop the pure truth. As then we have

before seen, that when the people are imbued with any error, it ought to be boldly resisted; so now we see with what weapons all God's servants ought to fight, in order to expose all those fallacies by which pure doctrine is assailed, even by setting in opposition to them the word of God: for this is the way which Jeremiah points out to us by his own example. He had spoken of the false prophets, he warned the people not to believe them; but as the minds of many were still vacillating, he confirms what he had said that they were not sent by God, because God never varies in his purpose, and never changes, and is never inconsistent with himself: "Now he has prefixed seventy years for your exile; whoever, then, tries to impugn that truth, is a professed and an open enemy to God." We now perceive the object of the Prophet; *When seventy years then shall be fulfilled*, &c.[1]

The Prophet here puts a restraint on the Jews, that they might not hasten before the time; and then he gives them the hope of a return, provided they quietly rested until the end fixed on by God. There are then two things in this verse, —that the people would ill consult their own good, if they hastened and promised to themselves a return before the end of seventy years,—and that when that time was completed, the hope of a return would be certain, for God had so promised.

He adds, *And I will raise up my good word towards you.* By *good word* he means what might bring joy to the Jews. Though God's word is fatal to the unbelieving, yet it never changes its nature; it ever remains good. And hence Paul says that the Gospel is a fatal odour to many, but that it is, nevertheless, a sweet odour before God, (2 Cor. ii. 16;) for it ought to be imputed to the fault of those who perish, that they receive not the doctrine of the Gospel to their own salvation. The word of God is then always good: but this

[1] The words literally are, "When at the mouth (or extremity) of fillings (or, of fulfilments) in Babylon *shall be* seventy years," &c., that is, when seventy years shall be completed, the whole number or measure being filled up. *Blayney's* version is, "Surely when seventy years have been completed at Babylon." But כי here is not rendered "surely," but "when," by the *Targ.* and the ancient versions.—*Ed.*

commendation is to be referred to experience, that is, when God really shews that he is propitious to us. And a shorter definition cannot be given, than that the good word denotes the promises, by which God testifies his paternal favour. But we have seen elsewhere that threatenings are called an evil word: why so? This character cannot, indeed, as it has been just said, be suitably applied to God's word; yet God's word which threatens destruction is called evil, as it is said, "I am he who create good and evil," (Isaiah xlv. 7;) but it is so according to our apprehension of its effects. And all this reasoning seems nearly superfluous, when we understand that God by the word of evil strikes the unbelieving with fear, but that the Prophet now means no other thing than to bear testimony to God's favour to the Jews: and hence he says, that they would find by experience, that God had not in vain promised what he had before mentioned.

But he is said to *rouse up*[1] his good word, that is, when it produced its effects before their eyes; for when God only speaks, and the thing itself does not yet appear, his word seems in a manner to lie dormant and to be useless. And for seventy years the Jews could perceive no other thing than that God was displeased with them, and thus they were continually in fear; for the promise continued as it were dormant, as its effects were not as yet visible. God then is said to rouse up his word, when he proves that he has not promised anything in vain. The meaning is, that the prophecy which Jeremiah had related would not be fruitless; but if the people did not soon know this, yet God, when the time came, would really prove that he deceives not his people, nor allures them when he promises anything, by vain hopes.

[1] The *Vulg.* is the same, "suscitabo—I will awaken," &c.; and so the *Sept.* and the *Targ.*; but the *Syr.* is, "I will ratify," or confirm. The primary meaning of קוּם is to rise, and in Hiphil, as here, to cause to rise, that is, to rouse, to awaken; its secondary meaning is, to stand, and in Hiphil, to cause to stand, that is, to ratify or confirm. The first idea is the most striking: the word of promise was as it were lying down and dormant for seventy years, and now it was to be roused up: "I will rouse up for you the very word of mine, the good." This is the literal rendering, except we take the secondary meaning of the verb, which is also very suitable, "I will ratify for you," &c.—*Ed.*

And the Prophet explains himself, for he says that God would *restore* them to their own country: for this was the *good word*, the promise of deliverance, as the word, according to what the people felt, was evil, and bitter, and bad, when God had threatened that he would cast away the reprobate. But it is an accidental thing, as I have said, that men find God's word to be evil for them or adverse to them; for it proceeds from their own fault, and not from the nature of the word. It follows—

11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

11. Quia ego cognosco cogitationes meas, quas ego cogito super vos, dicit Jehova, cogitationes pacis, et non in malum; ut dem vobis finem et expectationem.

He confirms the same thing, and employs many words, because it was difficult to raise up minds wholly broken down. For the world labours under two extreme evils,—they sink in despair, or are too much exalted by foolish pride: nay, there is no moderation except when ruled by God's Spirit we recumb on his word; for when they devise vain hopes for themselves, they are immediately rapt up above the clouds, fly here and there, and in short think that they can climb into heaven; this is the excess of vain and foolish confidence: but when they are dejected, then they fall down wholly frightened, nay, being astonished and lifeless they lose every feeling, receive no comfort, and cannot taste of anything which God promises. And both these evils prevailed evidently among the Jews. We have seen how much the Prophet laboured to lay prostrate their pride and arrogance; for they laughed at all threatenings, and remained ever secure; though God, as it were, with an armed hand and a drawn sword menaced them with certain destruction, yet nothing moved them. And when they were driven into exile, they were extremely credulous when the false prophets promised them a quick return; while, in the meantime, God, by his servants, shewed to them that he would be gracious to them, and after seventy years would become their deliverer; but they were deaf to all these things, nay, they rejected with disdain all these promises, and said, "What!

will God, forsooth, raise up the dead!" (Ezek. xxxvii. 12.)

This, then, is the reason why the Prophet now speaks so largely of their future redemption: it was difficult to persuade the Jews; for as they thought that they would soon return to their own country, they could not endure delay, nor exercise the patience which God commanded. They were at the same time, as we have said, quite confident, inasmuch as the false prophets filled their minds with vain hopes.

He therefore says, *I know the thoughts which I think towards you.* Some think that God claims here, as what peculiarly belongs to him, the foreknowledge of future things; but this is foreign to the Prophet's meaning. There is here, on the contrary, an implied contrast between the certain counsel of God, and the vain imaginations in which the Jews indulged themselves. The same thing is meant when Isaiah says, "As far as the heavens are from the earth, so far are my thoughts from your thoughts," (Isaiah lv. 9;) for they were wont absurdly to measure God by their own ideas. When anything was promised, they reasoned about its validity, and looked on all surrounding circumstances; and thus they consulted only their own brains. Hence God reproved them, and shewed how preposterously they acted, and said, that his thoughts were as remote from their thoughts as heaven is from the earth. So also in this place, though the two parts are not here expressed; the Prophet's object was no other than to shew, that the Jews ought to have surrendered themselves to God, and not to seek to be so acute as to understand how this or that would be done, but to feel convinced that what God had decreed could not be changed.

It must yet be remarked, that he speaks not here of his hidden and incomprehensible counsel. What then are the thoughts of which Jeremiah now speaks? They were those respecting the people's deliverance, after the time was completed, for God had promised that he would then be propitious to his Church. We hence see that the question here is not about the hidden counsels of God, but that the reference

is simply to the word which was well known to the Jews, even to the prophecy of Jeremiah, by which he had predicted that the Jews would be exiles for seventy years, and would at last find that their punishment would be only a small chastisement, as it would only be for a time: *I know* then *my thoughts.* But still he indirectly condemns the Jews, because they entertained no hope of deliverance except from what came within the reach of their senses. He then teaches us that true wisdom is to obey God, and to surrender ourselves to him; and that when we understand not his counsel, we ought resignedly to wait until the due time shall come.

He says that they were *thoughts of peace,*[1] that is, of benevolence. Peace, as it has been often said, is taken for felicity, as in verse 7, "For the peace of Babylon shall be your peace;" that is, if Babylon be prosperous, you shall be partakers of the same happiness. So now, in this place, God declares that his thoughts were those of peace, for he designed really to shew by the effect his paternal kindness towards his people.

He afterwards adds, *that I may give you the end and the expectation.* By אחרית, *achrit,* which means in Hebrew the last thing, we are to understand here the end, as though he had said, that it was to be deemed as final ruin, when people had been driven away to a foreign land. For it was no small trial when the Jews were deprived of that land which was the rest and habitation of God; it was the same as though they had been cut off from every hope: it was then a sort of repudiation, and repudiation was a kind of

[1] The word for "thoughts" might often be rendered "purposes," as it is sometimes in our version. The thoughts of God are his purposes. So here: "For I—I know the very purposes which I am purposing respecting you, saith Jehovah,—purposes of peace and not for evil, to restore you to this place." God, in saying, "to this place," represented himself as dwelling at Jerusalem, in the temple, where he had promised his presence.

In mentioning purposes and not purpose, the intention probably was to shew its firmness and certainty. The Hebrews sometimes used the plural number in order to enhance the meaning, as "wisdoms" for perfect wisdom, in Prov. ix. 1. Then the meaning of the word would be, "the very sure purpose;" and in a version, the *meaning,* and not the word literally, ought to be given.—*Ed.*

death. But here God declares that he would put an end to their exile, as it was to be only for a time. It is hence to be inferred, that the people did not perish when they were led into exile, but that they were only chastised by God's hand.

He adds *expectation*, which Jerome has rendered "patience," but in a very forced manner. There is, indeed, no doubt but that by this second word the Prophet more fully and clearly expressed what he meant by the first word, אחרית, *achrit*, even the end that was wished or desired. *I will* then *give you the end*, even that ye may enjoy the promises, as ye wish and expect, and ought to hope for, since God has made them.[1] Here I will make an end.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased kindly to shew to us thy paternal love, and givest us daily a testimony of it in thy Gospel,—O grant, that we may not go astray, following our vagrant and erring thoughts, but acquiesce in thy simple truth; and though we must be exercised in this world by many conflicts, as our life is to be as it were a continual warfare, may we yet never doubt but that there is prepared for us a sure rest in heaven through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Eleventh.

12. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

12. Et invocabitis me et ibitis; et orabitis me, et exaudiam vos.

JEREMIAH pursues the same subject, even that the Jews, after having undergone the punishment allotted to them by God, would at length return to their own country and find

[1] These two words are omitted in the *Sept.*; "the end and patience," is the *Vulg.*; "the end and hope," the *Targ.*; "the hope," only, the *Syr.* It is better to retain the words apart than to unite them, as many have done: "the end" was that of their troubles and exile, and "the expectation" was that of a return to their own country,—two things completely distinct though cotemporaneous: "To give you the end (of your exile) and the expectation (of a return,)" that is, the fulfilment of it. It is a metonymy, expectation is put for its object, or the thing expected.—*Ed.*

God merciful, and hence learn that their chastisement in exile would prove useful to them. He had indeed in the last verse explained this with sufficient clearness, but he now expresses the manner; and that would be by calling on God. He uses two words, *Ye shall call on me*, he says, *and pray*. The verb put between these two הלכתם, *elcatem*, is regarded almost by all as referring to a right course of life, as though the Prophet had said, that those who before wandered after their own lusts would now walk in the way of God, that is, in his Law; but this seems to me to be too forced an explanation. I doubt not then, but that the Prophet here indirectly reproves the indifference of the people in not immediately acknowledging that they were chastised by God's hand, that they ought in due time to repent. To *go* then or to walk is the same thing, in my judgment, as though he had said, "After having suffered the exile, not of one year, but of seventy years, ye shall then begin to be wise."

It was not only sloth but stupidity, that they were not subdued by God's scourges so as to call on him; but as they were of a disposition so rude and refractory, the Prophet here briefly reminds them that many years had been necessary to subdue them, as twenty or thirty years were not sufficient. We now then understand the design of the Prophet as to the word הלך, *elek*, to walk.[1] The meaning then is, that after having profited under the scourges of God, they would become humble so as to deprecate his wrath.

But there is added a promise, that God would *hear* them. It may however appear, that God promised conversion even in the first clause; and, no doubt, prayer is the fruit of repent-

[1] The two first verbs are wanting in the *Sept.* and the *Targ.*, and the second in the *Syr.* The *Vulg.* is according to our version, which is literally the Hebrew; and there are no various readings. It is difficult to understand the meaning here of the second verb, *go*, or proceed. Some give this meaning, "And ye shall call upon me and shall go *to your country;* and ye shall pray to me, and I will hearken to you." But the sense most suitable appears to be the following,—"And ye shall call on me, and ye shall go on and intercede with me, and I will hearken to you." The verb הלך is used in the sense of advancing or of going on in a course that is begun. See Gen. xxvi. 13; Ex. xix. 19. To "intercede" for themselves and others, was more than to call upon God. From calling they would go on to intercede, earnestly to plead for themselves and others, and then the promise is that God would hear them.—*Ed.*

...se, for it proceeds from faith; and repentance is the gift ...God. And further, we cannot call on God rightly and ...ncerely except by the guidance and teaching of the Holy ...pirit; for he it is who not only dictates our words, but also ...reates groanings in our hearts. And thus *Augustin*, writ...ng against the Pelagians, understands the passage, and ...roves that it is not in the power of man either to convert ...himself or to pray; "for God," he says, "would in vain ...promise what is in the power of man to do; and this is the promise, *ye shall pray;* it then follows, that we do not pray through the impulse of our own flesh, but when the Holy Spirit directs our hearts, and in a manner prays in us." I do not, however, know whether the Prophet intended to speak in so refined a manner. From other passages of Scripture it is easy to prove, that we cannot pray to God, except he anticipates us by his own Spirit. But as to this passage, I prefer to take a simpler meaning, that God would *hear*, when they began to pray; but yet he shews that it would not be after a short space of time, because they were almost untameable, and would not repent until after many years. It follows,—

13. And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

13. Et quæretis me, et invenietis, quia quæretis in toto corde vestro.

He confirms in other words the same thing; and yet the repetition, as we said yesterday, is not useless; for as the Jews perversely despised all threatenings, so it was difficult for them to receive any taste of God's goodness from his promises. This then is the reason why the Prophet employs many words on this subject. By the word *seek*, he means prayers and supplications, as mentioned in the last verse. And Christ also, exhorting his disciples to pray, says, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." There is no doubt but that he speaks there of prayer; he yet adopted various modes of speaking, derived from the common habits of men. But to seek, when we feel the need of God's grace, is nothing else than to pray. Hence the Prophet says, *ye shall seek me and ye shall find me.* And though he addresses here the Israelites, yet this doctrine

ought to be extended to the whole Church; for God testifies that he will be propitious to all who flee to him.

But as hypocrites are abundantly noisy, and seem to surpass the very saints in the ardour of their zeal, when the external profession is only regarded, the Prophet adds, *Because*[1] *ye shall seek me with your whole heart.* There is no doubt but that the Jews groaned a thousand times every year when oppressed by the Chaldeans; for they had to bear all kind of reproaches, and then they had nothing safe or secure. They were therefore under the necessity, except they were harder than iron, to offer some prayers. But God shews that the seasonable time would not come, until their prayers proceeded from a right feeling; this he means by the *whole heart.* It is indeed certain that men never turn to God with their whole heart, nor is the whole heart ever so much engaged in prayer as it ought to be; but the Prophet sets the whole heart in opposition to a double heart. Perfection, then, is not what is to be understood here, which can never be found in men, but integrity or sincerity.

We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet's words,—that the Jews, when they began in earnest to flee to God, would find him propitious, provided only they did this in sincerity of heart and not in dissimulation; and also that this would not take place soon, for their hardness and obstinacy were greater than that they could be brought to repent in a short time. Therefore God reminds them that there was need of many evils, so that they might at length

[1] The כי here is rendered "when" in our version, and in the ancient versions, except the *Sept.*, where it is γὰρ, "for," or because. The most usual meaning of the particle is "because;" and it may be so rendered here; for sincerity may be justly assigned as a reason why prayers are heard, without the implication of any merit. Indeed, in the very nature of things, prayer without sincerity cannot possibly be accepted.

In our version the meaning of the two verbs is reversed; the first ought rather to be rendered as meaning "to search for," and the latter to "seek." With the first is connected "finding," and this implies searching, and the verb בקש means sometimes to search for what is lost. The verse should be,—"And ye shall search for me and ye shall find me, because ye shall seek me with all your heart." To seek God means to seek his favour. They would search for him whom they had, as it were, lost, and they would find him because they would seek his favour with all sincerity; it would not be for a mercenary purpose, but for the sake of enjoying God's favour.—*Ed.*

turn and divest themselves of that perverseness to which they had wholly surrendered themselves.

Now the whole of this, as I have already observed, ought to be applied to the benefit of the Church; for this promise is to be extended to all the godly,—that when they call on God in their miseries, he will hear them. And Jeremiah seems to have taken this sentence from Isaiah, "As soon as thou callest on me, I will hear thee; before thou speakest, I will stretch forth my hand." (Isaiah lviii. 9.) And this circumstance also ought to be noticed, that the Prophet addressed the Jews who were miserably oppressed. Let us then know that this sentence is rightly addressed to those in distress, who seem to have God against them and displeased with them; and this is the seasonable time which is mentioned by David in Psalm xxxii. 6.

This passage also teaches us, that it is no wonder that the Lord doubles his scourges and does not immediately pardon us, because we are not so ready to bend as to return to him on the first day. He is therefore constrained by our perverseness to chastise us for a longer time; and yet this promise is still to be held valid, that if we even late repent, God will be still propitious to us, only that the reprobate are not under this pretext to indulge in their vices; for we see that profane men trifle with God, and wickedly abuse his paternal indulgence. Let the sinner then beware lest he should lay up for himself a store of vengeance, if he waits till the end of life. But there is still a hope set before those who have been long torpid in their sins, that if they at length come, though late, they shall still come in time, for God will hear them. But the exception ought to be carefully observed, that God will not be intreated, except he is sought with the whole heart, that is, in sincerity. So there is no reason for us to wonder that his ears are often closed to our prayers, because we only pretend to seek him, and that we are endued with no sincerity appears from our life. It now follows,—

14. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and

14. Et inveniar a vobis, dicit Jehova, et reducam captivitatem vestram, et colligam (*vel*, congregabo) vos ex omnibus gentibus et

from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

ex omnibus locis quo expulero vos illuc, dicit Jehova; et redire faciam vos ad locum e quo expuli vos illinc (*abundat*).

The Prophet now applies what he seemed to have spoken generally. He then shews the effect of God's favour, after having been reconciled to his people, even that he would *restore* their captivity, and gather them from all places. This was particularly said to the Jews; but the two former verses contain, as I have said, a general doctrine. He had before said, *Ye shall find me;* but he says now, *I shall be found by you,* or, I will shew myself to you. There is an implied contrast between the hiding and the manifestation, for God had in a manner hid himself during the time of exile; but he suddenly made his face to shine forth, and thus manifested himself as a Father, after having apparently forgotten his people. Suitably then does the Prophet speak here; for though the Lord ever looks on us, we on the other hand do not see him, nay, we think that he is far from us. But he then only appears to us, when we perceive that he cares for our salvation.

By saying, *from all nations and from all places,* he evidently obviated a doubt which otherwise might have crept into the minds of many, "How can it ever be that God will gather us after we have been thus dispersed?" For no certain region had been allotted to them, in which they might dwell together so as to form one body; but they had been scattered as by a violent whirlwind like chaff or stubble; and God had so driven them away that there was no hope of being again gathered. As then it was incredible, that a people so dispersed could be collected together, the Prophet says, "from all nations and from all places." The same thing is declared in the Psalms, "He will gather the dispersions of Israel." (Ps. cxlvii. 2.) For when the Jews looked on their dreadful dispersion, they could entertain no hope. We see then how the Prophet encouraged them still to hope, and bade them to struggle against this trial. The sentence seems to have been taken from Moses, for he says, "Though you be scattered through the extreme parts of the world,

yet God will gather you." (Deut. xxx. 1-3.) We see that Moses there expressly reproves the unbelief of the people, if they despaired of God's mercy and salvation, because they were torn and scattered. He therefore shews that God's power was abundantly sufficient to collect them again, though they were scattered to the four quarters of the world. We now perceive the object of the Prophet.[1]

And hence we may gather a useful doctrine,—that God in a wonderful manner gathers his Church when scattered, so as to form it into one body, however he may for a time obliterate its name and even its very appearance. And of this he has given us some proof in our time. For who could have thought that what we now see with our eyes, would ever take place? that God would in a secret manner gather his elect, when there was everywhere a dreadful desolation, and no corner found in the world where two or three faithful men could dwell together. We hence see that this prophecy has not been fulfilled only at one time, but that the grace of God is here set forth, which he has often manifested, and still manifests in gathering his Church. It follows,—

15. Because ye have said, The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon;

16. *Know* that thus saith the Lord of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, *and* of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity;

17. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

15. Quoniam dixistis, Excitabit nobis Jehova prophetas in Babylone;

16. Ideo sic dicit Jehova regi sedenti super solium Davidis et toti populo sedenti in hac urbe (*hoc est*, habitanti, *nam* הישב *hic diversis modis accipitur*,) fratribus vestris, qui non egressi sunt vobiscum in exilium;

17. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Ecce ego mitto in eos gladium, famem, pestem; et ponam eos tanquam ficus sordidas (*aut*, fœtidas,) quæ non comeduntur præ malitia (*id est*, præ amaritudine.)

Many interpreters connect the first of these verses with the preceding ones, and they seem not to think so without reason; for the reason given is not unsuitable, if we refer to

[1] The order found in this deserves notice; *restoration* is mentioned first, and then the means necessary for the purpose, the *gathering* of the people from all places; "I will restore your captivity," or captives, "and I will gather," &c. The concluding sentence is, "where I have removed you from there;" where, and from there, instead of whence.—*Ed.*

what the Prophet had said, even that the Jews were by no means to hope for a return until the end of seventy years. But the meaning I adopt is more probable; the particle כִּי, *ki*, is repeated; the first is causal, and the second an illative;[1] and consistently with the usage of Scripture the learned and the experienced think that this is the real meaning of the Prophet. He then says, that the captives were very foolish who hoped for a quick end to their exile, because they had false prophets who gave them such a promise; *ye have* then *said, that prophets have been given you in Chaldea*, and that God had there pitied you, because there are those who prophesy of a return in a short time. As then ye are so foolishly credulous, *Thus saith Jehovah to your brethren.* He then turns his discourse to the exiles, and exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be led astray. But here he indirectly reproves them, because they could not bear a condition which was even better than that of the residue, as though he had said, "What means this your unreasonableness! that when all your ways are closed up against you, and the power of your conqueror is so great that ye cannot move a finger without his nod, ye should yet think that you shall be set free in two years! and surely if you were before foolishly secure and confident, your calamities ought now to make you humble. But your brethren, who seem yet to enjoy liberty because they dwell at Jerusalem, (for those alone were then remaining,) even these your brethren suffer far more grievously than ye do."

[1] *Gataker* approves of this and says, evidently referring to *Calvin*, "So an interpreter of prime note rendereth it." That כִּי is sometimes an illative is generally admitted; and here the connection cannot otherwise be seen. There is a large gap after the 15th verse in the *Sept.*, the verses 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, are omitted, but not in the other versions nor in the *Targ.*; and *Blayney* has thereby been led to put the 15th verse out of its place and set it between the 20th and the 21st, but without sufficient reason. The connection, as shewn by *Calvin*, is suitable as the verse now is, and by removing it, the drift of what follows is not so clearly seen.

Another thing advanced by *Blayney*, though countenanced by *Houbigant* and *Horsley*, two rival innovators, is not to be admitted,—that the letter terminates at the end of the 20th verse, and not at the end of the 23d, and that what follows forms another letter. It is evident that what is contained in the 24th and in the following verses to the end, was written in consequence of an answer from Babylon to this letter. Compare verse 5th with the 28th.—*Ed.*

We now perceive for what purpose the Prophet, after having addressed the captives, turned his discourse to King Zedekiah and to the Jews, who as yet remained at home or in their own country; it was, that the captives might hence know how great was their madness to promise to themselves a return, after having been driven to remote lands, when final ruin was nigh both the king and the people, who as yet remained at Jerusalem; *Thus* then *saith Jehovah to the king who sits on the throne of David, and to all the people who sit in this city*, &c.

To *sit*, as I have already said, is to be taken here in two different senses; the king is said to sit on his throne while he retains his dignity; but the people are said to sit while they rest and dwell quietly in any place. It is not without reason that the word *king* is here expressly mentioned, for the exiles were ever wont to connect it with the hope of their return; "The Temple still remains, God is there worshipped, and the kingdom still exists; these things being secure, it cannot be all over with our nation." The safety of the people depended on the kingdom and the priesthood. When therefore, on the one hand, they fixed their eyes on royalty, and on the other hand, on the priesthood and sacrifices, they felt persuaded that it could not be otherwise but that God would soon restore them; for God had promised that the kingdom of David would be perpetual, as long as the sun and moon would shine in heaven. Except then this splendour or glory had been extinguished, the Israelites could not have been humiliated, especially as those who had been led into exile were of the tribe of Judah. We now understand why the word *king* was expressly mentioned. Though, then, a king still sat on the throne of David, he yet declares that his condition and that of his people was harder than that of the captive multitude.

He says, *I will pursue them with the sword, and famine, and pestilence.* The surrender of Jeconiah, as we have elsewhere seen, was voluntary; he was therefore more kindly received by the king of Babylon. At length the city was attacked, and as the siege was long, there was more rage felt against the king and the whole people, for the Chaldeans

had been wearied by their obstinacy. Hence it was, that they dealt more severely with them. But nothing happened except through the just vengeance of God; for though they exasperated the Chaldeans, there is no doubt but that God blinded their minds so that they procured for themselves a heavier judgment. It was, then, a punishment inflicted on them by God; and hence rightly does Jeremiah testify that God was the author of those calamities, for the Chaldeans, as we have seen elsewhere, were only ministers and executioners of God's vengeance; *Jehovah of hosts* then *says, Behold, I will pursue you*, &c.

He then adds, *And I will make them like worthless figs.* He calls the figs here שערים, *shorim*, worthless; but in the twenty-fourth chapter he called them bad; still the meaning is the same. There is no doubt but that he refers to the prophecy which we there explained. For the Prophet saw two baskets of figs, in one of which were sweet figs, and in the other bitter. God asked, "What seest thou?" he said, "Good figs, very good, and bad figs, very bad." God afterwards added, "The good and sweet figs are the captives; for I will at length shew mercy to them, and liberty to return shall be given them. They shall then be good figs, though now a different opinion is formed; for they who still lived at Jerusalem, think themselves more happy than the exiles; but the bad and bitter figs," he says, "are this people who pride themselves, because they have not been led into captivity; for I will consume them with the pestilence, and the famine, and the sword." This was the Prophet's language in that passage. He now again declares that King Zedekiah and all the people would be like bitter and putrid figs, which, being so bad, are not fit to be eaten. He then adds,—

18. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

18. Et persequar (*ad verbum est*, post eos: persequar eos) gladio, fame et peste; et ponam eos in commotionem (*vel*, concussionem) cunctis regnis terræ, in execrationem, et in stuporem, et in sibilum, et in probrum inter cunctas gentes ad quas expulero eos (*vel*, quo expulero eos illuc:)

19. Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them;* but ye would not hear, saith the Lord.

19. Propterea quod non audierunt sermones meos, inquit Jehovah, quos misi ad eos per servos meos Prophetas, mane surgendo et mittendo; et non audistis, inquit Jehova.

He goes on with the same subject,—that he would not cease to consume them with pestilence, famine, and the sword, until he wholly destroyed them, according to what we find in the twenty-fourth chapter. He repeats what is in that chapter; but the words are taken from the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and from the twenty-ninth. The prophets, we know, drew the substance of their doctrine from the fountain of the Law, and, strictly speaking, brought forward nothing new, but accommodated the doctrine of Moses to the circumstances of the time in which each lived.

Hence we find among the curses of the Law these words, *I will set them for a commotion*, or a concussion. The word may be explained in two ways,—either that the nations would tremble at such a sad spectacle,—or that they would shake their head. The second view is to be preferred, according to what I have stated elsewhere, *I will* then *set them for a commotion*,[1] that is, every one who shall see their miseries, will shake his head in contempt, as though he had said, "All will assent to the just vengeance of God, and ye shall be objects of reproach among all the heathens; for all will acknowledge that ye suffer most justly for your sins."

He adds, *for a curse.* The word אלה, *ale*, is properly an oath, but is taken in many places for a curse, which is introduced or understood when we swear. But as men often expose themselves to punishment for perjury, the word means, frequently, a curse; and what is to be understood, as it has been explained elsewhere, is a pattern or formula of a curse; and we have seen in what sense the Prophet said this, that is, that every one who wished to curse himself or others, or to imprecate, as they say, some dire things, would take the Jews for an example, "May God curse thee as he did the Jews;" or, "May he draw forth his severity to thy ruin, as he did to the Jews." He then says that they

[1] See a Note in vol. ii. p. 255.

would be *for a curse*, that is, that they would be so miserable that they would be taken as an example in imprecations.

He afterwards adds, *for an astonishment*, as he had spoken of the shaking of the head, so now he mentions astonishment, which is something more grievous, that is, when such a spectacle presents itself as makes all men to stand astonished, as not knowing what it means. *Hissing* is mentioned; as it is said elsewhere that they would be a proverb, משל, *meshel*, and also a taunt, so Jeremiah says in this place, that they would be a *hissing*, as he has spoken of the shaking of the head.[1]

And lastly he adds, that they would be a *reproach* even to all nations, for all would deem them worthy of their calamities, however grievous they were, when a comparison would be made between their iniquities and God's vengeance. The reason follows, *because they hearkened not to God.* But I cannot now finish.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast given so remarkable a proof both of thy wrath and of thy paternal kindness in thy dealings with thine ancient people,—O grant, that we may not by our obstinacy provoke thine extreme wrath, but in time anticipate thy judgment, so that we may find thee reconcilable, and never doubt but that thou wilt be merciful to us when we sincerely turn to thee; and as we are so prone to all evil, yea, and rush headlong into it, and as our wickedness and hardness are so great, grant to us, we pray thee, the spirit of meekness, that we may in all things submit ourselves to thee, and thus render ourselves thy children, that we may also find thee to be our Father in thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twelfth.

THE Prophet, after having denounced God's judgment on those who remained in their own country as well as on the exiles, subjoins this reason, because they *hearkened not* to the word of the Lord; and this was a most grievous sin. Though ignorance is no excuse before God, for those who

[1] See a Note in p. 236.

are without the Law must perish; yet the servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. And the more abundant God's grace is in calling us to the right way of salvation, the more base is our ingratitude when we close our ears and disregard the concern and care which he manifests for our salvation. Let us then know that nothing is less tolerable than the rejection of the prophetic word.

And we must notice what follows, *which I sent them by my servants the prophets.* The Jews might have otherwise objected and said, that they did not intend to be rebellious against God, but that there were many contentions among the prophets. Lest, then, they should seek an evasion by a pretence of this kind, he says that the word, brought by his ministers and witnesses the prophets, was worthy of no less reverence than if angels came down from heaven to them. And this passage serves to shew the use of external doctrine, which fanatical men despise, thinking the hidden word sufficient, that is, whatever they may dream. But God thus proves the obedience of our faith, while he rules us by the hand and labour of men. Whosoever then rejects the faithful teachers of the word, shews that he is a despiser of God himself. The meaning is, that God defines his word, not as an oracle of any kind, but as the doctrine which has been deposited with faithful teachers.

He afterwards adds, *rising up early and sending.* The metaphor is taken from men who are sedulous and diligent. We indeed know that God never awakes and never changes place; but he could not otherwise express his paternal care toward his people, as though he had said, that he was sedulously engaged in admonishing them. And thus the more inexcusable was rendered the sloth of the people; for God hastened as it were to rise up early, as they who spare no labour, but willingly deprive themselves of some portion of their sleep, that they may complete their work or their journey. As God then manifested so much diligence in securing the wellbeing of men, the more shameful is the sloth of men, when they become deaf, or are not moved, but remain in their indifference. It now follows,—

20. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon;

21. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes:

20. Et vos audite sermonem Jehovæ cuncta captivitas, quam misi Jerosolyma Babylonem;

21. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, ad Achab filium Colaiah, et ad Zedechiam filium Maassiæ, prophetantes vobis in nomine meo mendacium, Ecce ego ponam eos (*vel*, tradam) in manum Nebuchadnezer regis Babylonis; et percutiet eos coram oculis vestris:

Jeremiah announces a special prophecy, but in confirmation of his former doctrine. His object is still the same, to prevent the captives, as they had begun, to listen to flatteries, and to make them feel assured that they were to bear their exile till the end of seventy years. But he speaks here of three impostors; he connects two of them together, and mentions the third by himself. He directs his discourse especially to all the captives, for he deigned not to address those who professed to be God's enemies, and sold themselves as slaves to the devil for the purpose of deceiving. It was therefore useless to spend labour on them. But he addressed the whole people, and at the same time foretold what would happen to these two false prophets, even Ahab and Zedekiah. He calls one the son of Kolaiah, and the other the son of Maaseiah; for Ahab was a name then in frequent use, and Zedekiah was a name which, on account of the memory of a pious and godly king, was in high esteem among the good. To prevent then any mistake, he mentioned their fathers.

The import of the prophecy is, that a judgment would soon overtake them, as they would be killed by King Nebuchadnezzar. They were in exile, but such madness had possessed them, that they hesitated not to provoke the wrath of that tyrant whom they knew to be cruel and bloody. Then Jeremiah declares, that as they thus deceived the people, they would soon be punished, as Nebuchadnezzar would slay them. There is yet no doubt but that Nebuchadnezzar had regard to his own private advantage; for before they were brought before him, he wished to allay every cause of tumult. As they ceased not to encourage the hope of a speedy return, without some check, it could

not be otherwise but that frequent disturbances would arise. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar, as it is usual with earthly kings, consulted his own benefit. But he was in the meantime the servant of God; for these two impostors who had promised a return to the people, were to be exposed to contempt. Their death then disclosed their vanity, for it thereby appeared that they were not sent by God. It is indeed true that God's faithful servants are often cruelly treated, nay, even slain by the ungodly. But the case was different as to these two. For they were not proved guilty of falsehood, because they happened to have unhappily prophesied, but because they raised up a standard as it were, and said, that the people would soon return to their own country; and hence it was that they were slain. We then see that what would take place was not without reason foretold by Jeremiah; for from their death it might have been concluded, that whatever they had promised respecting the return of the people, were mere fallacies; and they were slain even before the time which they had predicted. We now perceive the meaning. We shall now notice the words.

He says, *Hear ye, the whole captivity, the word of Jehovah.* He would have the Jews to be attentive, for if a thousand impostors had been killed, yet their faith in falsehood would never have been destroyed, had not Jeremiah prophesied before the time what would take place. He then sits here as a judge; for though Nebuchadnezzar ordered them to be killed, yet it appears evident that it was ordained by God, and indeed for this end, that the people might learn to repent. We hence see that Jeremiah was their judge; and Nebuchadnezzar afterwards executed what God by the mouth of his servant had pronounced as a judgment. This is the reason why he addressed his words to the whole people.

He yet at the same time adds, that they had been *sent* by God, *whom I have sent*, &c.; and he said this, in order that they might not imagine that they went there by chance or by adverse fortune, and that they might acknowledge that when they were deprived of their own country, it was a just punishment for their sins.

By saying, *I will give* (or deliver) *them into the hand of*

Nebuchadnezzar, the Prophet still more clearly expresses what I have just said, that they would be thus slain by the order of the king, because God had determined what was to be done to them. And he assigns the cause of their death or mentions its author, that the Jews might not fix their eyes on the king of Babylon. What had Nebuchadnezzar in view? to preserve a peaceable kingdom; he saw the danger of a tumult if he pardoned these two men, who had disturbed the people. Lest, then, the Jews should look only on the design of the king, God here sets before them another and a higher reason, even because they *prophesied falsely* in his *name*. A clearer explanation follows,—

22. And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which *are* in Babylon, saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

22. Et sumetur ab ipsis maledictio apud omnem captivitatem Jehudah, quæ est in Babylone, dicendo, Statuat te Jehova ut Zedechiam et sicut Achab, quos combussit rex Babylonis igni (*vel*, ustulavit, *vel*, frixit *etiam, ut alii vertunt;* קלה *non tantum significat comburere, sed ustulare, vel paulatim urere, quod idem est, sed Hieronymus vertit fuisse frictos;*)

Here we are to notice the circumstances; for if Jeremiah had only spoken of their death, the Jews might still have been doubtful whether he had delivered a prophecy; but when now is added what kind of punishment was inflicted on them, Jeremiah points out as by the finger what was as yet unknown, and even incredible. It might indeed have happened to the captives that the king should order them to be slain, but it could not have occurred to any man to suppose what Jeremiah declares, that they would be *roasted*[1] *in the fire*. We hence see that God here obviates the evasions of perverse minds, so that there would be no room for evading, when he specifies the very kind of death which they were to undergo.

But he says first, *Taken from them shall be a curse*, that is, the form of cursing. Mentioned yesterday was אלה, *ale*, an oath; he puts down now קללה, *kolle;* and קלל, *koll*, is

[1] "Fried" is the word used by the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Tary*. The Hebrew word is found as a verb in no other passage, but as a participle applied to parched corn, Lev. ii. 14; Josh. v. 11.—*Ed.*

to curse. The meaning then is, that they would become an exemplar of a curse to all the captives, who would say, *May God make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted.* The cause of their death is again repeated; and the Prophet did not without reason dwell on this, that he might turn away the eyes of the people from the immediate cause, which was commonly known, that is, that Nebuchadnezzar would not endure any tumults to be raised in his dominions; that they might therefore acknowledge God to be the author of this punishment, he says,—

23. Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and *am* a witness, saith the Lord.

23. Propterea quod fecerunt (*vel,* patrarunt) flagitium in Israel, et scortati sunt cum uxoribus sociorum suorum, et locuti sunt sermonem in nomine meo mendaciter; quod (*vel,* quem sermonem) non mandaveram ipsis; ego autem sum cognitor et testis, dicit Jehova.

We perceive why the Prophet mentions the cause of their death; it was, that the Jews might regard the event, not according to their own thoughts, but that they might feel assured that God took vengeance on the impiety of those who had falsely pretended his name. For we know that we always look here and there, and that when we find an immediate cause, we neglect and esteem as nothing the judgments of God. In order then to correct this evil, Jeremiah again repeats that Zedekiah and Ahab were not punished by the king of Babylon, but by God himself, *because they committed villany in Israel.* Some render נבלה, *nubele,* enormity or abomination; but I am disposed to render it villany, or turpitude, or filthiness.[1] *They,* then, *committed a filthy thing.* He afterwards specifies two kinds, that they *committed adultery with the wives of their friends,* and that they *falsely prophesied in the name of God.*

By the first clause we see how great was the stupidity of

[1] "Iniquity" is the *Sept.*; "folly," the *Vulg.*; "crime" or offence, the *Syr.*; and "disgrace," the *Targ.* Vileness, or abomination, is its meaning. It is applied to the sin of prostitution, Gen. xxxiv. 7,—of stealing, Josh. vii. 15,—of murder, Judg. xx. 6,—of sodomy, xix. 24,—of incest, 2 Sam. xiii. 12,—and of base ingratitude, 1 Sam. xxv. 25. The most suitable term for all these places is abomination, and not "folly," as in our version. It means what is hateful, vile, contemptible, or abominable. It refers here to what was abominably filthy—adultery; and to what was abominably wicked and presumptuous—speaking lies in God's name.—*Ed.*

the people, for they did not consider what was the life of those who pretended to be witnesses for God, as though they were angels come down from heaven. Their wickedness might indeed have been concealed; but there is no doubt but that the Jews were extremely stupid, for they had willingly seized on the vain promises, which afforded them gratification. As, then, they were anxious to return, and wished to be restored to their own country as it were against the will of God, and sought to break through all obstacles by the force of their own obstinacy; it was a just punishment, that they were so blinded as not to see what was yet sufficiently manifest, even that these vaunting prophets were adulterers, and that the filthiness of their life was so great, that it was certain that they had nothing divine or heavenly in them.

Then there is another kind of evil added, that they *prophesied falsely* in God's name. This was an atrocious crime; for as his truth is precious to God, so it is a sacrilege that he cannot bear, when his truth is turned into falsehood. But as the minds of them all were so corrupted, that no one would open his eyes, God testifies, that though their adulteries might be unknown to the people, that though their vanity in their false prophecies might not be perceived, yet it was enough that he *knew and was a witness.*

Now this passage is worthy of special notice; for hypocrites, until they find that they are proved guilty before men, fear nothing, nay, they haughtily exalt themselves, even when things are justly laid to their charge. Since, then, the hardness and dishonesty of hypocrites are so great, it is necessary to summon them before God's tribunal, that they may know that they may a hundred times be acquitted by the world, and yet that this derogates nothing from God's judgment. It now follows—

24. *Thus* shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,

25. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that *are* at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

26. The Lord hath made thee

24. Et ad Semaiah Nehelamitem dices, dicendo, (sic dices,)

25. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, dicendo, Propterea quod tu misisti in nomine meo literas ad totum populum, qui est Jerosolymæ, et ad Zephaniam filium Maassiæ, et ad cunctos sacerdotes, dicendo,

26. Jehova posuit te (*vel*, con-

priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man *that is* mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks.

27. Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?

stituit te) sacerdotem pro Jehoiada sacerdote, ut sitis præfecti domus Jehovæ super omnem virum insanum (*vel*, arreptitium) et prophetantem, ut ponas ipsum in carcerem (*alii vertunt*, in cippum) et in compedes (*vel*, manicas, *quod aliis magis placet.*)

27. Et tu quare non increpuisti Jeremiam Anathotitem, qui prophetat vobis?

Here Jeremiah prophesies respecting a third person, who had written a letter to the priests and to the whole people against himself, and had expostulated with the chief priest and with others, because Jeremiah had, with impunity, long exhorted the people to bear their long exile. This is the import of the passage; but as to his punishment we shall see what it was at the end of the chapter. I did not wish to give the whole, because I cannot finish this prophecy to-day. I have therefore taken the former part only, even that Shemaiah had not only encouraged the people, as others did, to hope for a return, and to raise a commotion, but had also scattered his poison at Jerusalem, and had endeavoured to load Jeremiah with ill-will, that he might be slain as a false prophet, and an enemy to the public good, as well as to the Law and the Temple.

Thou shalt then *say to* or of *Shemaiah*, for אֶל, *al*, may be taken in either sense.[1] His crime is now related, we shall hereafter see what his punishment was. His crime was, that he *wrote* in God's *name*. Had he only been a fanner of cruelty, he would have deserved no pardon; but his crime was doubled, for he dared to pretend the authority of God, and to boast that he was as it were his scribe, as though he had said that his letter had been dictated by the Holy Spirit, that he had not spoken his own thoughts, or presumptuously, but that God could not endure the liberty given to Jeremiah; for though he continually preached of long exile, yet the chief-priest suffered him, and no one of the whole priestly order opposed him; and at the same time he blames the people for their indulgence. That he

[1] He is called the "Nehelamite." Some render the word "a dreamer:" but, as *Blayney* observes, "the termination speaks it to be a patronymic." It refers probably to the place of his birth.—*Ed.*

did all this in God's name was far more grievous than if he had written as a private individual. And it is said that he had written to the whole people, even in order that they might all in a body unite against Jeremiah. For, had he written only to the priests, they might have objected that they were not at liberty to act so violently against Jeremiah, as sedition might be raised. We hence see the craft of this base man; though he despised the people, yet that all of them, even the least, might help the priests to do this act of cruelty, and that there might be the union of all, he included the whole people in his letter.

He afterwards mentioned *the priest* and *all the priests*. The word *priest*, in the singular number, meant the high-priest: then the *priests* were not only those descended from Aaron, but all the Levites. There was the high-priest, and then the descendants of Aaron were the chief, and, as it were, the colleagues of the high-priest; but the Levites were an inferior order, though here by the priests he means also the Levites.

Here follows the subject of the letter, *Jehovah hath made thee a priest*, &c. Here the impostor Shemaiah accuses the high-priest of ingratitude, because he had been chosen in the place of another. For it is probable that Jehoiada was still living, but that he had been led away into Chaldea with the other exiles. As then so high a dignity had, beyond hope, and before the time, come to the high-priest, the false prophet reproves him, because he did not rightly acknowledge this favour of God, as though he had said, that he was rendering an unworthy reward to God, who had raised him to that high station: God, he said, *hath made thee a priest in the place of Jehoiada the priest*. Thus the ministers of Satan transform themselves into angels of light; and yet they cannot so dexterously imitate God's servants, but that their deceit makes itself presently known; for craftiness is very different from a right and prudent counsel. God endues his servants with counsel and wisdom; but Satan, with craft and guile. Though, then, at the first view, some artifice appears in this letter of the false prophet, yet we may gather from its contents, that he falsely pretended the name of God, that he falsely alleged that the chief priest was

chosen in the place of Jehoiada. *That ye should be,* he says: at first he addresses the high-priest, but now he includes also others,—*that ye should be the keepers,* or the rulers *of the house of God.*[1] For though the chief power was in the high-priest, yet as he could not alone undertake everything, it was necessary for him to have others connected with him. This is the reason why Shemaiah not only says that the high-priest was a ruler in the Temple of God, but after having placed him in the highest honour, mentions also others.

He says *against every man* that is *mad;* so מְשֻׁגָּע, *meshego,* is rendered by Jerome, and I think not unsuitably; for the word means properly one that is insane: but this was applied to false teachers, because they boasted that they were under a divine impulse, when they spoke their own thoughts. This appears evident from the ninth chapter of Hosea, where it is said that the people would at length acknowledge that the prophets, who had flattered them, were insane, and that the men of the Spirit were mad. The Prophet conceded to them both names, that they were prophets and men of the Spirit, that is, spiritual; but he proved that they had only the names and not the reality: for prophets were called spiritual men, because God inspired them with his Spirit; but the ungodly, when they wished to revile the true prophets, called them mad. So did they speak who were with

[1] The Hebrew is, "that there might be overseers in the house of Jehovah for every one," &c. He was a priest under the high-priest for this purpose. Zephaniah was second in authority, as it appears from chapter lii. 24. He was probably the *ruler* or governor of the Temple, as Pashur was, chapter xx. 1. Hence the paraphrase of the *Targum* as to this clause, "That thou mightest be made the chief of the priests in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord for every one," &c. *Blayney* thinks it probable that Zephaniah succeeded a priest called Jehoiada, in that office, who had been either deposed for bad conduct or carried away into exile. *Gataker* and *Grotius* think that the reference is to Jehoiada the priest, the zealous reformer in the reign of Jehoash, 2 Kings xi. and xii.; and that Shemaiah's object was to rouse Zephaniah to shew similar zeal for the house of God. If so, here is an instance, not uncommon, in which a good example of zeal was perverted for the purpose of encouraging zeal in exercising tyranny and suppressing the truth.

It is somewhat singular that all the ancient versions, as well as the *Targum*, give "overseers," or officers, in the singular number; the *Vulg.* is, "That thou mightest be a commander . . . . over every one;" the *Sept.*, "That thou mightest be an umpire;" the *Syr.*, "That thou mightest be a censor." But there are no MSS. in favour of such a reading.—*Ed.*

Jehu, when a prophet came to annoint him, "What means this mad fellow?" this word מְשֻׁגָּע, *meshego*, is what they used; and they called him in contempt mad, who had yet spoken by the secret impulse of the Spirit. (2 Kings ix. 11.) So, in like manner, do the ungodly rave in contempt of God against everything found in Scripture.[1]

But as it has been already stated, it was necessary to distinguish between the true servants of God and those only in name; for many boasted that they were called by God, and yet were impostors. God then called these mad and insane; but what did the ungodly do? they transferred the reproach to the lawful servants of God. So, in this place, Shemaiah says, that Jeremiah was mad, who falsely pretended the name of God, and prophesied falsely.

He adds, *That thou shouldest put him in prison*, or cast him into prison or the stocks, as some render the word. Then he says, *in manacles*, that is, thou shouldest bind him, until his impiety be known, so that thou mayest detain him in prison.[2] It is, indeed, probable that the chief priests had assumed this power during the disordered state of things. This proceeding no doubt resulted from a good principle; for God ever designed that his Church should be well governed: he therefore commanded in his Law, that when any dispute or question arose, the chief priest was to be the judge, (Deut. xvii. 8, 9;) but when mention is here made of prison and of manacles, it was an act, no doubt, beyond the Law. It is therefore probable that it was added to the Law of God when the state of things was in disorder and confusion among the Jews. And whence was the origin of the evil? from the ignorance and sloth of the priests. They ought to have

[1] The word מְשֻׁגָּע is rendered "frantic" by the *Sept.*,—"mad," by the *Vulg.*,—"raving in lies," by the *Syr.*,—and "foolish," by the *Targ.* As applied to prophets it means one in an ecstasy, or in raptures, whether true or false,—an enthusiast, but taken mostly in a bad sense.

The next word is in Hithpael, "self-prophesying," or prophesying of himself, not made a prophet by God; imperfectly rendered, "prophesying," by the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and *Syr.* It may be rendered "pretending to be a prophet."—*Ed.*

[2] See note in p. 16. The last word is found only here, and is rendered "dungeon" by the *Sept.*, and "prison" by the *Vulg.*, *Syr.*, and *Targ.* The Samaritan version, says *Parkhurst*, uses it as a verb in Exod. xiv. 3. in the sense of confining, shutting up. The noun, therefore, may well designate a prison.—*Ed.*

been the messengers of the God of hosts, the interpreters of the Law, the truth ought to have been sought from their mouth; but they were dumb dogs, nay, they had so degenerated, that nothing priestly was found in them; they had forgotten the Law, there was no religion in them. As then they had neglected their office, it was necessary to choose other prophets: and as we have said elsewhere, it was as it were accidental that God raised up prophets from the common people. There was, indeed, a necessity of having prophets always in the ancient Church; but God would have taken them from the Levites, except that he designed to expose them to reproach before the whole people, when he made prophets even of herdsmen, as in the case of Amos.

As then the priests suffered the prophetic office to be transferred to the common people, a new way was devised, that it might not be any loss to them, as under the Papacy; for we know that bishops are for no other reason made rulers in the Church, but that there might be pastors and teachers. For of what use could these asses be, whom we know to be for the most part destitute of any learning? What could these men do, who are profane, and given up to their own pleasures and enjoyments? In short, what could gamesters and panders do? for such are almost all the Papal bishops. It was therefore necessary to give up their office to brawling monks, "You shall teach, for we resign to you the pulpits." But, at the same time, they retained the power of judgment in their own hands: when any controversy arose, neither the noisy brawlers nor the dumb beasts could of themselves decide anything; for ignorance prevented the latter, and power was wanting to the former. How, then, did the bishops formerly condemn heretics? and how do they condemn them still? Why, thus: When one was a Carmelite, they called in the Franciscans; and when one was an Augustinian, the Dominicans were summoned. For, as I have said, these mute animals had no knowledge nor wisdom. And yet a certain dignity was maintained by the bishops or their vicars, when they pronounced sentence in condemning heretics. And such was probably the case among the ancient people; for those who pretended to be prophets were summoned, and that by the authority of the

high-priest, under the pretext of law, but not without some corruption added to it; for God had not given fetters and manacles to the priests, that they might thus restrain those who might create disturbance and corrupt the pure truth. But what remains I shall defer to the next Lecture.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are prone to what is false, and wholly devoted to vanity, we may be governed by thy Spirit, and desire no other thing than to be obedient to thee; and as we offer ourselves to thee, as thy disciples, grant that having the light of thy word shining before us, we may follow the way which thou shewest to us, and thus persevere in a right course, until we shall at length come to that blessed rest which is prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord. —Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirteenth.

We saw in the last Lecture the substance of the letter which Shemaiah had written to the chief priest. He reproved him for his neglect, because he did not silence Jeremiah according to the right and duty of his office. This had a plausible appearance; but it was a false principle which he assumed,—that Jeremiah falsely pretended God's name, and was not sent, and had no command to prophesy;[1] this was false. Justly then does the Prophet now oppose him, and pronounce the punishment which he deserved. It then follows,—

28. For therefore he sent unto us *in* Babylon, saying, This *captivity is* long: build ye houses, and dwell *in them;* and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

29. And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

28. Nempe quia misit (*vel*, quia ideo, *ad verbum*, quia ob id, *vel*, propterea) ad nos in Babylonem, dicendo, Longum est (*tempus exilii*,) ædificate domos et habitate, plantate hortos et comedite fructum eorum.

29. Legerat autem Zephania epistolam hanc in auribus Jeremiæ prophetæ.

The crime ascribed to Jeremiah was,—that he rendered the captives indifferent, so that they cast off every hope of

[1] The verb for prophesying is in Hithpael as before; he still represents Jeremiah as one who made himself a Prophet,—"Who of himself prophesies to you;" and not as *Blayney* renders the clause, "Who giveth himself out as a Prophet among you." What he meant is, that what Jeremiah prophesied came from himself, the very thing which God ascribed to the false prophets; thus wicked men impute to the good the very sin of which they themselves are guilty.—*Ed.*

deliverance, and disregarded their own country. But the design of Jeremiah was far different; it was, that the people might not by too much haste anticipate the promises of God, and that he might also extend their hope to the end prefixed. As there are two causal particles here found, כי על־כן, *ki ol-ken*, some give this rendering, "For for this cause," that is, because he claimed the name of a Prophet. The simpler meaning however is, that he gives a reason why Shemaiah blamed the neglect of the priest, even because he (Jeremiah) had habituated the captives to bear their exiles. But he reproached the holy man, as though he had made them indifferent through long delay. Jeremiah had indeed said that the time would be long; but this particular phrase, *It is long*, means a different thing, as though Jeremiah wished to bury in oblivion the hope of a return, because it would have been foolish to languish so long.

It follows, *And Zephaniah had read*, &c. The past perfect tense is more suitable here, for the verse ought to be put in a parenthesis. The Prophet obviates a doubt which might have been entertained. He then shews how the prophecy was made known to him; he was one of the hearers when the letter was read. And it is probable that the priest called Jeremiah on purpose, that he might be proved guilty by his own accuser. However this may have been, he wished to expose the holy man to the hatred of the people, or rather to their fury. The constancy of Jeremiah was worthy of greater praise, while he boldly reproved the arrogance of them all, who had nothing else in view but to suppress God's truth by force and tyranny.

30. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,

31. Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite, Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie;

32. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people,

30. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam, dicendo,

31. Mitte ad totam captivitatem, dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova de Semaiah Nehelamita, Propterea quod prophetavit vobis Semaiah, cum ego non miserim ipsum, et confidere vos fecit super mendacio;

32. Ideo sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego visitans (*id est*, visitabo) super Semaiah Nehelamitam, et super semen ejus, non erit illi vir, qui habitet in medio populi hujus, et non videbit bonum quod ego faciam po-

saith the Lord; because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord.

pulo meo, dicit Jehova, quia avertionem (*vel*, defectionem) loquutus est contra Jehovam.

Jeremiah distinctly declares that this impostor would not escape unpunished, because he had dared falsely to pretend the name of God, and avowedly opposed Jeremiah. Here, then, the Prophet makes no long discourse, but on the contrary simply declares by the power of the Spirit what would take place. He speaks in God's name, for he had been sent as a herald to proclaim this judgment. This, then, is the reason why he is so brief; for there was to be no dispute, though the impostor on the other hand was carrying himself very high, and hesitated not to overthrow the revealed truth of God, which had been confirmed by many witnesses.

The sum of what is stated is, that Shemaiah would not see the favour of God, and that none of his seed would remain alive. It was a curse under the Law, as it is well known, that one should have no seed left. (Deut. xxviii. 18.) Jeremiah then denounces on Shemaiah this punishment, that no one of his seed would remain alive, but that he would die childless; and then he excludes him from the enjoyment of the benefit which the Lord had determined to bestow on his people. He wished to return after two years to his own country; Jeremiah commanded the people patiently to endure their exile to the end of seventy years, which was the time of their deliverance. As, then, Shemaiah despised the lawful time, he was deprived of the favour of seeing that event.

Added then is the reason; first, because he had abused the name of God; he *prophesied* and *I had not sent him*, said the Lord; the second reason was, that he deceived the people with a vain hope; falsehood of itself is worthy of a heavy punishment; but when it was pernicious to God's people, it became still more heinous, and therefore worthy of a twofold punishment.

Now we see that Jeremiah esteemed as nothing that he was condemned by Shemaiah; for he retained his own dignity; though the impostor attempted to subvert his authority, yet the Prophet speaks as though he was wholly unstained and not hurt nor affected by any calumny. The same magnanimity of mind is what all faithful teachers ought to possess, so as to look down, as from on high, on all

deceivers, and their chatterings, and curses, and to go on in their course, however insolently the despisers of God may rise up against them, and tear and overwhelm them with reproaches. Let then all those who seek to serve God and his Church follow this example of the Prophet, so that they may not be discouraged in their minds when they find that they have to contend with dishonest men.

But Jeremiah is bidden to write to all the captives, for Shemaiah was not worthy of being reproved; but God had a regard for the public safety of the exiles, and reminded them of what would take place. It is indeed probable that this prophecy was without any fruit, until it was known by the event itself that Jeremiah had not without reason thus prophesied. Until, then, Shemaiah died, and died without any to succeed him, the people disregarded what had been predicted; but at length they were constrained to acknowledge that Jeremiah had not spoken his own thought, but had been furnished with a message from God; for God really fulfilled what he had predicted by the mouth of his Prophet.

The two reasons follow, why God resolved to punish Shemaiah: the first is, that he had seized on the prophetic office without a call; and hence we conclude, according to what has already appeared, that this office which had been instituted by God, was perverted, when any one intruded into it without a commission. Let us then know that no one ought to be deemed a legitimate teacher, except he can really shew that he has been called from above. I have in several places stated that two things belonged to a call; the inward call was the chief thing when the state of the Church was in disorder, that is, when the priests neglected the duty of teaching, and wholly departed from what their office required. When, therefore, the Church became disordered, God applied an extraordinary remedy by raising up prophets. But when the Church is rightly and regularly formed, no one can boast that he is a pastor or a minister, except he is also called by the suffrages of men. But as I have spoken on this subject more at large on the twenty-third chapter, I only slightly refer to it now.

As to the present passage in which God condemns Shemaiah for having thrust in himself without being called, what is meant is, that he brought forward his own dreams,

having been furnished with no commission; for the prophetic office was then special. Then Shemaiah is here rejected as an impostor, because he had only brought forward prophecies suggested by his own brains, which yet he falsely pretended to have been from God; and it was a most atrocious crime, as it was a sacrilege to abuse, as Shemaiah did, the name of God. But the atrocity of his sin the Prophet still further sets forth, by saying that his prophecies were pernicious and fatal to the people. We hence conclude how solicitous God was for the safety of his people, in thus avenging the falsehoods which were calculated to lead them to ruin; and Jeremiah shews that Shemaiah's teaching was ruinous, because he inebriated the people with false confidence; *he made you*, he says, *to trust in falsehood;* for he promised them a quick return, when it was God's will, that the Jews should patiently bear their exile till the end of the seventy years.

But we may deduce from this passage a useful doctrine,—that nothing is more pestiferous in a Church than for men to be led away by a false confidence or trust. For it is the foundation of all true religion to depend on the mouth or word of God; and it is also the foundation of our salvation. As, then, the salvation of men as well as true religion is founded on faith and the obedience of faith; so also when we are drawn away to some false trust, the whole of true religion falls to the ground, and at the same time every hope of salvation vanishes. This ought to be carefully observed, so that we may learn to embrace that doctrine which teaches us to trust in no other than in the only true God, and reject all those inventions which may lead us away from him, even in the least degree, so that we may not look around us nor be carried here and there.

For this reason, as I have said, the Prophet declares that Shemaiah would die childless, and be precluded from enjoying the favour which God had resolved and even promised to bestow on his people. And all this, as I have reminded you, was said for the sake of the people; for this prophecy did no good to Shemaiah nor to his posterity; but his punishment ought to have benefited the miserable exiles so as to lead them to repentance, however late it may have been. This is the import of the passage.

A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF JEREMIAH.

CHAPTERS XX—XXIX.

CHAPTER XX.

1 And Pashur the son of Immer the priest, (and he was a governor in the Temple of Jehovah,) heard Jeremiah prophe-
2 sying these words: and Pashur smote Jeremiah the Prophet, and put him in the prison which was in the higher gate of Ben-
3 jamin, opposite the house of Jehovah. And it happened the day after, that Pashur brought out Jeremiah from prison; and Jeremiah said to him,—

Not Pashur has Jehovah called thy name,
But terror on every side:

4 For thus saith Jehovah,—
Behold, I will make thee a terror
To thyself and to all thy friends;
And fall shall they by the sword of thine enemies,
While thine eyes are looking on;
And all Judah will I deliver
Into the hand of the king of Babylon;
And he shall carry them into Babylon,
And shall smite them with the sword:
5 And I will give up all the strength of this city,
And all its labour and its every precious thing;
And all the treasures of the kings of Judah
Will I give up into the hands of their enemies;
And they shall spoil them and take them away,
And they shall lead them into Babylon.
6 And thou, Pashur, and all the inhabitants of thy house,
Go shall ye into captivity;
Thou shalt come to Babylon, and there die,
And there shalt thou be buried and thy friends,
To whom thou hast falsely prophesied.

7 Thou hast deceived me, Jehovah, and I was deceived;
Thou hast constrained me and didst prevail;
I am become a scorn all the day,

All make a mock of me;
8 For from the time I have spoken,
I cried aloud against violence,
And devastation have I proclaimed:
Because the word of Jehovah became to me
A reproach and derision all the day,
9 Therefore I said, I will not mention *him*,
Nor speak any more in his name:
But it became in my heart as a burning fire,
Closed up in my bones;
And I was wearied with forbearing,
And I did not prevail.

10 For I heard the slander of many,
Terror on every side,
"Report ye, and we will report to him:"
All my friends watch for my halting,—
"He may go astray, then we shall prevail against him,
And take our revenge on him."
11 But Jehovah is with me as a terrible giant;
Therefore my persecutors shall fall and not prevail;
They shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not succeed;
It will be a perpetual reproach
Which shall not be forgotten.
12 But thou, Jehovah of hosts,
Art he who provest the righteous,
Who seest the reins and the heart;
I shall see thy vengeance on them,
For to thee have I opened my cause.
13 Sing ye to Jehovah, praise ye Jehovah,
For he has rescued the soul of the distressed
From the hand of the wicked.

14 Cursed *be* the day on which I was born;
The day on which my mother bare me,
Let it not be blessed:
15 Cursed *be* the man who told my father,
Saying, "Born to thee is a male child,"
Who with joy made him joyful;
16 And let that man be as the cities,
Which Jehovah destroyed and repented not;
And let him hear a cry in the morning,
And a tumult at noontide.
17 Why hast thou not slain me from the womb?
That my mother might be my grave,
Or her womb a perpetual conception?
18 Why from the womb did I come forth,
That I might see trouble and sorrow,
That my days might be consumed in reproach!

CHAPTER XXI.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, when
king Zedekiah sent to him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and
Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,
2 Inquire now for us of Jehovah, for Nebuchadnezzar the
king of Babylon makes war with us, if Jehovah will deal with
us according to his wondrous works, that he may ascend from us.
3 And Jeremiah said to them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah,—
4 Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel,—
Behold, I prohibit all the warlike instruments
Which are in your hands, with which ye fight
Against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans,
Who besiege you without the walls;
And I will gather them into the midst of this city:
5 And fight will I myself against you
With an extended hand and with a strong arm,
Yea, in wrath and fury and great indignation;
6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city,
Both man and beast;
By a great pestilence shall they die.

7 And afterwards Jehovah said,—
I will deliver Zedekiah the king of Judah,
His servants also and the people,
Even those who shall remain in the city,
From the pestilence, and the sword, and the famine,
Into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon,
And into the hand of their enemies,
And into the hand of those who seek their life;
And he shall smite them with the edge of the sword;
And he will not spare them,
Nor forgive, nor shew mercy.

8 To this people also shalt thou say,—
Thus saith Jehovah,—
Behold, I set before you
The way of life and the way of death:
9 He who abides in this city shall die
By the sword, or by famine, or by pestilence;
But he who goeth out and dwells
With the Chaldeans who besiege you,
Shall live, and his life shall be for a prey:
10 For I have set my face against this city,
For evil and not for good, saith Jehovah;
Into the hand of the king of Babylon shall it be given,
And he shall burn it with fire.

11 And as to the house of the king of Judah,

Hear ye the word of Jehovah;
12 O house of David, thus saith Jehovah,—
In the morning execute ye judgment,
And free the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor,
Lest go forth as fire my indignation,
And burn, and there be none to extinguish it,—
Because of the wickedness of their doings.
13 Behold, I am against thee, inhabitant of the valley—
The rock in the plain, saith Jehovah,
Who say, "Who shall descend to us?
And who shall enter our habitations?"
14 I will even visit upon you
The fruit of your doings, saith Jehovah;
And I will kindle a fire in its forest,
And it shall consume all around it.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 Thus saith Jehovah, Go down to the house of the king of
2 Judah, and speak there this word, and say,—
Hear the word of Jehovah, king of Judah,
Who sittest on the throne of David,
Thou, and thy servants, and thy people,
Who enter in through these gates:
3 Thus saith Jehovah, Do judgment and justice,
And rescue the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor;
The stranger, the orphan, and the widow,
Defraud not; exercise no violence,
Nor shed innocent blood in this place.
4 For if obeying ye obey this word,
Then shall enter through the gates of this house
Kings, sitting for David on his throne,
Riding in chariots and on horses,—
He himself, and his servants, and his people:
5 But if ye will not obey these words,
By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah,
That a waste shall this house become.
6 For thus saith Jehovah of the house of the king of Judah,
Gilead to me art thou, the head of Lebanon;
Surely I will make thee a desert,
As cities which are not inhabited:
7 And I will prepare against thee destroyers,
Every man and his instruments,
And they shall cut down thy choice cedars,
And cast them into the fire.
8 And pass shall many nations through this city,
And say shall each to his friend,
"Why hath Jehovah done thus to this great city?"
9 And they shall say, "Because they have forsaken

The covenant of Jehovah their God,
And bowed down before alien gods, and served them."

10 Weep ye not for the dead, nor bewail him;
Weeping, weep for him who migrates,
For return shall he no more,
That he may see the land of his nativity:
11 For thus saith Jehovah concerning Shallum
The son of Josiah the king of Judah,
Who reigns instead of Josiah his father,—
When he shall have gone forth from this place
He shall not return here any more:
12 For in the land where they shall lead him away
There shall he die,
And this land shall he see no more.

13 Wo to him who builds not with justice his house,
And not with judgment his chambers;
Who makes his neighbour to serve him for nothing,
And pays him not for his work;
14 Who says, "I will build for myself
A large house and wide chambers;"
And he perforates for himself windows,
And covered it is with cedar,
And painted with vermilion.
15 Shalt thou reign because thou inclosest thyself in cedar?
Thy father, did he not eat and drink?
When he did judgment and justice,
It was then well with him:
16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy,
It was then well *with him;*
Was not this to know me? saith Jehovah:
17 For thy eye and thy heart are not
Except on thy covetousness,
And on shedding innocent blood,
And on rapacity and oppression, to do *them.*
18 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,
Of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah the king of Judah,
They shall not bewail him,—
"Ah, my brother! Ah, sister!"
They shall not bewail him,—
"Ah, Lord! Ah, his glory!"
19 With the burial of an ass shall he be buried,
Drawn out and cast forth
Beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

20 Ascend into Lebanon and cry,
And on Bashan lift up thy voice,
And cry all around,

For destroyed are all thy lovers.
21 I spake to thee in thy tranquillity,
Thou saidst, "I will not hear:"
It has been thy manner from thy youth
That thou didst not hear my voice.
22 Thy pastors shall the wind consume,
And thy lovers, into exile shall they go:
Surely ashamed shalt thou then be,
And blush for all thy wickedness.
23 Thou hast set thy seat on Lebanon,
Thou hast made thy nest among the cedars:
How gracious wilt thou be
When come on thee shall sorrows,
The pain as of one in travail!

24 Live do I, saith Jehovah;
Were Coniah the son of Jehoiakim the king of Judah
A sealing ring on my right hand,
I would thence pluck thee off:
25 And I will deliver thee
Into the hand of those who seek thy life,
And into the hand of those whose face thou dreadest,
Even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar
The king of Babylon,
And into the hand of the Chaldeans:
26 And I will cast thee and thy mother who bare thee
Into a foreign land where ye were not born,
And there shall ye die;
27 And into the land they set their mind to return,
Thither they shall not return.
28 Is this man Coniah a despised *and* broken statue?
Is he a vessel in which there is no delight?
Why are they cast forth, he and his seed,
And thrown to a land which they have not known?
29 Land! land! land! hear the word of Jehovah,—
30 Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless,
A man who shall not prosper in his days;
Nay, none of his seed shall prosper,
Sitting on the throne of David,
And ruling any more in Judah.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 Wo to the pastors who destroy and scatter
The flock of my pastures! saith Jehovah;
2 Therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,
Concerning the pastors who feed my people,—
Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away,
And ye have not visited them;

Behold, I will visit upon you
The wickedness of your doings, saith Jehovah:
3 But I will gather the remnant of my sheep
From all the lands to which I shall drive them,
And cause them to return to their own folds,
And they shall become fruitful and multiply;
4 And I will raise up over them pastors
Who shall feed them;
And they shall no more fear nor dread,
Nor shall they fail, saith Jehovah.

5 Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
That I will raise up to David a righteous branch,
And reign shall a king,
And prudently shall he act;
He will do judgment and justice in the land.
6 In his days saved shall be Judah,
And Israel shall dwell in confidence:
And this is the name by which they shall call him,
JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 Therefore, behold, the days will come, saith Jehovah,
In which it shall no more be said, "Live does Jehovah,"
Who brought the children of Israel from the land of Egypt;
8 But rather, "Live does Jehovah," who has brought up
And led the seed of the house of Israel
From the land of the north, and all the lands
To which I had driven them;
And they shall dwell in their own land.

9 On account of the prophets,
Broken is my heart within me,
Disjointed are all my bones;
I am become like a drunken man
Who has been overcome by wine,
On account of Jehovah,
And on account of the words of his holiness;
10 For with adulterers the land is filled:
For on account of perjury mourned has the land,
Dried up have the pastures of the desert;
And their course has been evil,
And their strength not right.
11 For both prophet and priest have acted wickedly;
Even in my house have I found
Their wickedness, saith Jehovah.
12 Therefore their way shall be to them slippery;
In darkness shall they stumble and fall therein;
For I shall bring on them evil,
The year of their visitation, saith Jehovah.

13 In the prophets of Samaria have I seen fatuity,
They prophesied by Baal,
And made my people Israel to go astray:
14 But in the prophets of Jerusalem
Have I seen depravity;
By adultery and walking in falsehood
They even strengthen the hands of the wicked,
That they may not turn, each from his wickedness:
They shall be all to me as Sodom,
And its inhabitants as Gomorrah.

15 Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts
Concerning these prophets,—
I will feed them with a deadly poison,
And give them waters of gall to drink;
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
Has gone forth impiety through all the land.

16 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Hear ye not the words of the prophets
Who prophesy to you;
They make you to be vain;
A vision of their own heart do they speak,
And not from the mouth of Jehovah;
17 Who say to those who despise me,
Spoken has Jehovah, "Peace shall be to you;"
And to all who walk in the wickedness of their own hearts
They say, "Come upon you shall not evil;
18 For who hath been in the counsel of Jehovah,
And seen and heard his word?
Who hath listened to his word and heard it?"
19 Behold the whirlwind of Jehovah!
With fury it goeth forth;
Even the impending whirlwind;
On the head of the ungodly shall it fall:
20 Turn back shall not the anger of Jehovah
Till he has done and confirmed
The thoughts of his own heart:
In the extremity of days
Ye shall fully understand this.
21 I sent not the prophets, yet they have run;
I spoke not to them, yet they have prophesied.
22 But if they had stood in my counsel,
Surely they would have made my people hear my words,
And turned them from their evil way,
And from the wickedness of their doings?

23 Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah,
And not a God afar off?

24 Can a man hide himself in coverts
That I could not see him? saith Jehovah;
Do not I fill the heavens and the earth? saith Jehovah.
25 I have heard what the prophets say
Who prophesy falsely in my name,
Saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed."
26 How long will it be in the heart of the prophets
To prophesy falsehood,
Yea, of the prophets of the deceit of their own heart!
27 Who think to make my people forget
My name by their own dreams,
Which they relate, each to his friend,
As forgotten my name have their fathers through Baal.
28 The prophet who hath a dream,
He will relate a dream;
And he with whom is my word,
He will speak my word of truth:
What is the chaff to the wheat? saith Jehovah.
29 Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah,
And like the hammer that breaks the stone?

30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah,
Who steal my words, each from his friend:
31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah,
Who elevate their own tongue,
And say, "*It is* the word:"
32 Behold, I am against those
Who prophesy false dreams, saith Jehovah;
And who relate them, and deceive my people
By their lies and their levity,
Though I sent them not, nor commanded them:
And they will not profit this people, saith Jehovah.

33 But if ask thee will this people,
Or a prophet, or a priest, saying,
"What is the burden of Jehovah?"
Then shalt thou say to them, "What burden?—
I will forsake you, saith Jehovah."
34 And the prophet, and the priest, and the people,
Who shall say, "The burden of Jehovah,"
I will even punish that man and his house.
35 Thus shall ye say, every one to his friend,
And every one to his brother,
"What has Jehovah answered?"
Or "What has Jehovah spoken?"
36 But the burden of Jehovah mention no more;
For the burden of each shall be his word:
For ye have corrupted the words of the living God,
Of Jehovah of hosts, our God.

37 Thus shalt thou say to the prophet,—
"What has Jehovah answered thee?"
Or "What has Jehovah spoken?"

38 But if ye will say, "The burden of Jehovah;"
Therefore Jehovah saith thus,—
Because ye say, "The burden of Jehovah,"
Though I sent to you, saying,
Ye shall not say, "The burden of Jehovah."
39 Therefore, behold, I will wholly take you away,
And will cast you off, and this city
Which I gave to you and to your fathers,
From my presence;
40 And I will bring upon you a perpetual reproach,
And a perpetual disgrace,
Which shall not be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 Jehovah shewed me a vision, and, behold, two baskets of figs set before the Temple of Jehovah, after Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, and the artificer, and the engraver, from Jerusalem, and led them away
2 to Babylon: one basket of figs very good, like early figs, and another basket of figs very bad, which could not be eaten, being so bad.
3 And Jehovah said to me, "What seest thou, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, good figs, very good; and bad, very bad,
4 which cannot be eaten, being so bad." And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying,
5 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, As these good figs, so will I acknowledge the captivity of Judah, which I sent from
6 this place to the land of the Chaldeans, for good: and I will set my eye upon them for good, and will restore them to this land; and I will build them up and not pull them down, and
7 I will plant them and not pluck them up; and I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they shall be to me a people, and I will be to them a God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

8 But as to the bad figs, which cannot be eaten, being so bad, surely thus saith Jehovah, so will I render Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue at Jerusalem, them who remain in this land and those who dwell in the land of
9 Egypt; and I will set them for a commotion, for an evil to all kingdoms of the earth, for a reproach, and a terror, and a taunt,
10 and a curse in all places where I shall drive them; and I will send among them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence,

until they be consumed from the face of the land which I gave to them and to their fathers.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 The word which came by Jeremiah to all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah the king of Judah, (this was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar the king
2 of Babylon,) which Jeremiah the prophet spake to all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,—
3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon the king of Judah, to this day, (this is the twenty-third year,) hath Jehovah spoken to me, and I have spoken to you, rising up
4 early, but ye have not hearkened: and Jehovah sent to you all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending, (but
5 ye hearkened not, nor inclined your ear to hear,) saying,—

Return ye, I pray, each from his evil way,
And from the wickedness of your doings,
And dwell in the land which Jehovah gave
To you and to your fathers from age to age:
6 And walk ye not after alien gods,
To serve them and to bow down before them;
And provoke me not by the work of your hands,
And I will not do you evil.
7 But ye hearkened not to me, saith Jehovah;
For ye provoked me by the work of your hands,
To do evil to you.
8 Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Because ye have not hearkened to my words,
9 Behold, I will send for and take
All the families of the north, saith Jehovah,
And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant;
And I will bring them to this land
And to its inhabitants,
And to all these nations around;
And I will destroy them,
And make them an astonishment,
And a hissing, and perpetual desolations;
10 And I will cause to cease among them
The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness,
The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride,
The sound of millstones, and the light of the candle.
11 And this whole land shall be a waste and a wonder;
And serve shall these nations
The king of Babylon seventy years.

12 And it shall be, when fulfilled shall be seventy years,
That I shall visit on the king of Babylon,

And on his people, saith Jehovah,
Their iniquity,—and upon the land of Chaldea,
And I will make it perpetual desolations:
13 And I will bring on that land all my words,
Which I have spoken concerning it,
All that is written in this book,
Which Jeremiah has prophesied of the nations:
14 For they shall rule over strong nations,
And over mighty kings;
And I will render to these according to their doing,
And according to the work of their hands.

15 For thus said Jehovah, the God of Israel, to me, Take the
cup of the wine of this wrath from my hand, and give it to
16 drink to all the nations to whom I shall send thee, that they
may drink and be incensed, and become distracted on account
17 of the sword which I shall send among them. And I took the
cup from the hand of Jehovah, and gave it to drink to all the
18 nations to whom Jehovah had sent me,—to Jerusalem and to
the cities of Judah, even to its kings and to its princes, to make
them a waste, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a curse,
19 as at this day,—to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, to his servants,
20 and to his princes, and to all his people, and to the promiscuous
multitude, and to all the kings of the land of Uz, and to all the
kings of the land of the Philistines, and to Askelon, and to
21 Gaza, and to Ekron, and to the remnant of Ashdod,—to Edom,
22 and to Moab, and to the children of Ammon, and to all the
kings of Tyre, and to all the kings of Sidon, and to all the kings
23 of the island beyond the sea, and to Dedan, and to Tema, and
24 to Buz, and to all the extreme ones in a corner, and to all the
kings of Arabia, and to all the kings of the mingled race who
25 dwell in the desert, and to all the kings of Zimri, and to all the
26 kings of Elam, and to all the kings of the Medes, and to all the
kings of the north, those who are near, as well as those who
are afar off, every one shall be against his brother,—and to all
kingdoms of the earth, which are upon the face of the earth;
and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

27 And thou shalt say to them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
the God of Israel, Drink ye and be drunken, and vomit and
fall, and rise not on account of the sword which I send among
28 you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from thine
hand to drink, then shalt thou say to them, Thus saith Jehovah
29 of hosts, Drinking ye shall drink; for behold, upon the city on
which my name is called, I begin to bring evil, and shall ye be
treated as innocent? ye shall not be treated as innocent; for I
am calling for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth, saith
Jehovah.

30 Thou shalt also prophesy to them all these words, and say to them,—
Jehovah from on high shall roar,
And from his holy habitation utter his voice;
Roaring he shall roar on his dwelling,
A shout like that of vintagers shall he respond
Against all the inhabitants of the earth:
31 Reach shall the sound to the extremity of the earth,
For a contention has Jehovah with the nations,
A dispute has he with all flesh;
The wicked will he give to the sword, saith Jehovah.

32 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation,
And a great tempest shall be raised
From the extremities of the earth;
33 And the slain of Jehovah in that day shall be
From one end to the other end of the earth:
They shall not be lamented, nor gathered, nor buried;
As dung on the face of the earth shall they be.
34 Howl, ye pastors, and cry,
And roll [in the dust,] ye choice of the flock;
For fulfilled are your days
For the slaughter and your breakings;
And ye shall fall like a precious vessel:
35 And perish shall flight from the pastors,
And escape from the choice of the flock.
36 The voice of the cry of the pastors!
And the howling of the choice of the flock!
For destroyed has Jehovah their pastures;
37 Perished also are the peaceful tents,
Through the indignation of the wrath of Jehovah.
38 He has left, as a lion, his tabernacle;
For reduced is their land to a waste
Through the wrath of the Oppressor,
And through the indignation of his wrath.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, this word came from Jehovah, saying,
2 Thus saith Jehovah, Stand in the court of the house of Jehovah, and speak to all the cities of Judah, who come to worship in the Temple of Jehovah, all the words which I have
3 commanded thee to speak to them; diminish not a word: if peradventure they will hear, and turn, each from his evil way, then will I repent of the evil which I think of doing to them
4 on account of the wickedness of their doings. Thou shalt then say to them, Thus saith Jehovah, If ye will not hear me to walk

5 in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words
of my servants the prophets, whom I send to you, rising up
6 early and sending, (but ye have not hearkened,) then will I
make this house like Shiloh, and this city will I make a curse
to all the nations of the earth.
7 And the priests, and the prophets, and all the people heard
8 Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Jehovah. And
it was when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that Jehovah
had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests,
and the prophets, and all the people apprehended him, saying,
9 "Dying thou shalt die; why hast thou prophesied in the name
of Jehovah, saying, 'Like Shiloh shall this house be, and this
city shall be desolate without an inhabitant?'" (And all the
people were assembled against Jeremiah in the Temple of Je-
hovah.)
10 And the princes of Judah heard of these things, and went
down from the king's house to the house of Jehovah, and sat
at the entrance of the new gate of the Temple of Jehovah.
11 Then said the priests and the prophets to the princes, and to
all the people, saying, "This man is worthy of death; for he
has prophesied against this city as ye have heard with your
12 ears." And Jeremiah said to all the princes, and to all the
people, saying,—
Jehovah hath sent me to prophesy against this house, and
13 against this city all the words which ye have heard: and now
make good your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of
Jehovah your God, and Jehovah will repent of the evil which
14 he hath pronounced against you. And as for me, behold I am
in your hand; do to me as may seem good and right in your
15 eyes: but know assuredly, that if ye slay me, ye will bring in-
nocent blood on yourselves, and on this city, and on its inhabi-
tants; for in truth Jehovah hath sent me to you, to speak all
these words in your ears.
16 And the princes, and all the people said to the priests and
the prophets, "This man is not worthy of death; for in the
name of Jehovah our God hath he spoken to us."
17 Then rose up men from the elders of the land, and said to
18 the whole assembly of the people, saying,—Micah the Mo-
rasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah,
saying,—
"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Sion as a field shall be plowed,
And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
And the mount of the house like the heights of the forest."
19 Killing, did Hezekiah the king of Judah, and all Judah, kill
him? did he not fear Jehovah? and did he not supplicate the
face of Jehovah? and Jehovah repented of the evil which he
had spoken against them: but we are doing a great evil against
our own souls.

20 But there was also a man who prophesied in the name of
Jehovah, Uriah the son of Shemaiah, from Kirjath-jearim;
and he prophesied against this city, and against this land ac-
21 cording to all the words of Jeremiah: when the King Jehoiakim
and all the chief men and the princes heard his words, then the
king sought to slay him; but Uriah heard and feared, and he
22 fled and went into Egypt. And the King Jehoiakim sent men
into Egypt, *even* Elnathan the son of Achbor, and men with
23 him into Egypt: and they brought Uriah up from Egypt, and
brought him to the King Jehoiakim, who slew him with the
sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common
people.
24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was
with Jeremiah, so that he was not delivered into the hand of
the people to be slain.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah,
the king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Jehovah,
saying,—
2 Thus said Jehovah to me, Make for thee bands and yokes,
3 and put them on thy neck; then send them to the king of
Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the children
of Ammon, and to the king of Tyre, and to the king of Sidon,
by the hand of the ambassadors, who shall come to Jerusalem
4 to Zedekiah the king of Judah: and thou shalt give them a
message to their masters, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,
Thus shall ye say to your masters,—
5 I made the earth, man also and beast,
Which are on the face of the earth,
By my great power and my extended arm;
And given it have I to whom it seemed good to me:
6 And now given have I all these lands
Into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar
The king of Babylon, my servant;
And also the beast of the field
Have I given to him to serve him:
7 And serve him and his son,
And his son's son, shall all nations,
Until the time of his land shall come,
And also of himself; yea, serve him
Shall many nations and great kings.
8 And it shall be as to the nation and kingdom,
Who will not serve him, *even*
Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon,
And who will not put their neck
Under the yoke of the king of Babylon,

With the sword, and famine, and pestilence,
Will I visit that nation, saith Jehovah,
Until I consume them by his hand.
9 And you, hearken not to your prophets,
And to your diviners, and to your dreamers,
And to your augurs, and to your sorcerers,
Who speak to you, saying,—
"Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon;"
10 For they prophesy falsely to you,
That they might move you far from your own land,
And that I might cast you away and ye perish:
11 But the nation which shall bring its neck
Under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him,
I will leave it in its own land, saith Jehovah;
And it shall cultivate it and dwell in it.

12 To Zedekiah also, the king of Judah, I spoke according to all these words, saying,—
Bring your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon,
And serve him and his people, and ye shall live.
13 Why should ye perish, thou and thy people,
By the sword, and famine, and pestilence,
As Jehovah has spoken of the nation,
Which will not serve the king of Babylon:
14 And hearken not to the words of the prophets,
Who speak to you, saying,—
"Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon;"
For falsely do they prophesy to you;
15 For I have not sent them, saith Jehovah,
But they prophesy in my name falsely,
That I might drive you out,
And that ye might perish, ye,
And the prophets who prophesy to you.

16 To the priests also and to all the people spake I, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah,—
Hearken not to the words of your prophets,
Who prophesy to you, saying,—
"Behold, the vessels of the house of Jehovah
Shall now soon be restored from Babylon;"
For falsehood do these prophesy to you:
17 Hearken ye not to them;
Serve the king of Babylon and ye shall live;
Why should this city become a desolation?
18 But if they be prophets,
And if the word of Jehovah be with them,
Let them now intercede with Jehovah of hosts,
That the vessels which remain in the house of Jehovah,
And in the house of the king of Judah,

And in Jerusalem, may not go to Babylon.
19 For thus saith Jehovah of hosts of the pillars, and of the sea,
and of the bases, and of the residue of the vessels which are
20 left in this city, which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon
did not take away, when he led captive Jeconiah the king of
Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah
21 and Jerusalem; yea, thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of
Israel, of the vessels which remain in the house of Jehovah,
22 and in the house of the king, and in Jerusalem; to Babylon
shall they be carried, and there shall they be until the day in
which I shall visit them, saith Jehovah, and bring them up
and restore them to this place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 And it was in that year, at the beginning of the reign of
Zedekiah the king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth
month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, who was
of Gibeon, spoke to me in the Temple of Jehovah, in the pre-
sence of the priests, and of all the people, saying,
2 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I
3 have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Further, when
two years shall pass, I will restore to this place all the vessels
of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar the king of
Babylon has taken away from this place and carried to Baby-
4 lon: and Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim the king of Judah,
and all the captives of Judah, who have gone to Babylon, will
I restore to this place, saith Jehovah; for I have broken the
yoke of the king of Babylon.
5 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet,
in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the
6 people, who were standing in the house of Jehovah; yea, Jere-
miah the prophet said, Amen, may Jehovah do so, may Jeho-
vah confirm thy words which thou hast prophesied as to the
restoration of the vessels of the temple, and of all the captives
7 from Babylon to this place. Nevertheless, hear thou now this
word which I declare in thy hearing, and in the hearing of all
8 the people; the prophets who have been before me and before
thee from the beginning, and prophesied against many nations
and great kingdoms, *have prophesied* of war, and of evil, and of
9 pestilence: the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the
word shall come to pass, that prophet shall be known that Je-
hovah has sent him in truth.
10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the band from the neck
11 of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it; and Hananiah spake in
the presence of all the people, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah, In this manner will I break off the yoke
of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon from the neck of all
the nations. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

12 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, after Hananiah
the prophet broke off the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah the
prophet, saying,—
13 Go and speak to Hananiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah,
Thou hast broken the bands of wood; but make for thee instead
14 of them bands of iron: for thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the
God of Israel, A yoke of iron have I laid on the neck of all
these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar the king
of Babylon, and they shall serve him; and I have also given
to him the beasts of the field.
15 Jeremiah the prophet said also to Hananiah the prophet,
Hear, I pray, Hananiah; Jehovah hath not sent thee, and thou
16 hast made this people to trust in falsehood: therefore, thus saith
Jehovah, Behold, I will cast thee away from the face of the
earth; die shalt thou this year, because thou hast spoken re-
17 volt against Jehovah. And Hananiah the prophet died in
that year, in the seventh month.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 These are the words of the epistle which Jeremiah the prophet
sent from Jerusalem to the residue of the elders of the capti-
vity, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to the whole
people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had led away captive from
2 Jerusalem to Babylon, after Jeconiah the king, and the queen
had gone forth, and the chief men, the princes of Judah and
Jerusalem, the artificers also, and the engravers, from Jerusa-
3 lem,—by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and of
Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah the king of
Judah had sent to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, to
Babylon,) saying,—
4 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, to the
whole captivity whom I have led captive from Jerusalem to
Babylon,—
5 "Build ye houses, and inhabit *them;*
Plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;
6 Take wives, and beget sons and daughters;
Take also wives for your sons,
And give your daughters in marriage to husbands,
And let them bear sons and daughters;
And increase there and be not diminished:
7 And seek the peace of the city,
To which I have removed you;
And pray for it to Jehovah,
For in its peace shall be your peace."

8 For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,—
Let not your prophets who are in the midst of you,

Nor your diviners, deceive you;
And attend not to your dreams which ye dream:
9 For they falsely prophesy to you in my name;
I have not sent them, saith Jehovah.

10 For thus saith Jehovah,—
For when completed in Babylon
Shall be seventy years, I will visit you,
And will rouse up for you my good word,
That I may bring you back to this place:
11 For I know my thoughts,
Which I think of you, saith Jehovah,—
Thoughts of peace and not of evil,
To give you the end and the expectation.
12 And ye shall call on me and go forward;
And pray to me, and I will hear you:
13 And ye shall seek me, and shall find *me;*
Because ye will seek me with the whole heart.
14 And I will be found by you, saith Jehovah,
And will restore your captivity,
And will gather you from all nations,
And from all places, where I have driven you,
Saith Jehovah, and I will bring you back
To the place whence I have expelled you.

15 As ye have said, "Raise for us will Jehovah prophets in Babylon;" therefore thus saith Jehovah to the king who sits on the throne of David, and to the whole people who dwell in this city, to your brethren who have not gone forth with you into
16 exile,—thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
17 Behold, I will send upon them the sword,
The famine, and the pestilence,
And will make them like worthless figs,
Which, being so bad, cannot be eaten:
18 Yea, I will pursue them with the sword,
The famine, and the pestilence,
And will set them for a commotion
To all the kingdoms of the earth,
For a curse and for an astonishment,
And for a hissing and for a reproach,
Among all the nations to whom I shall drive them;
19 Because they hearkened not to my words, saith Jehovah,
Which I sent to them by my servants the prophets,
Rising up early and sending;
And ye hearkened not, saith Jehovah.

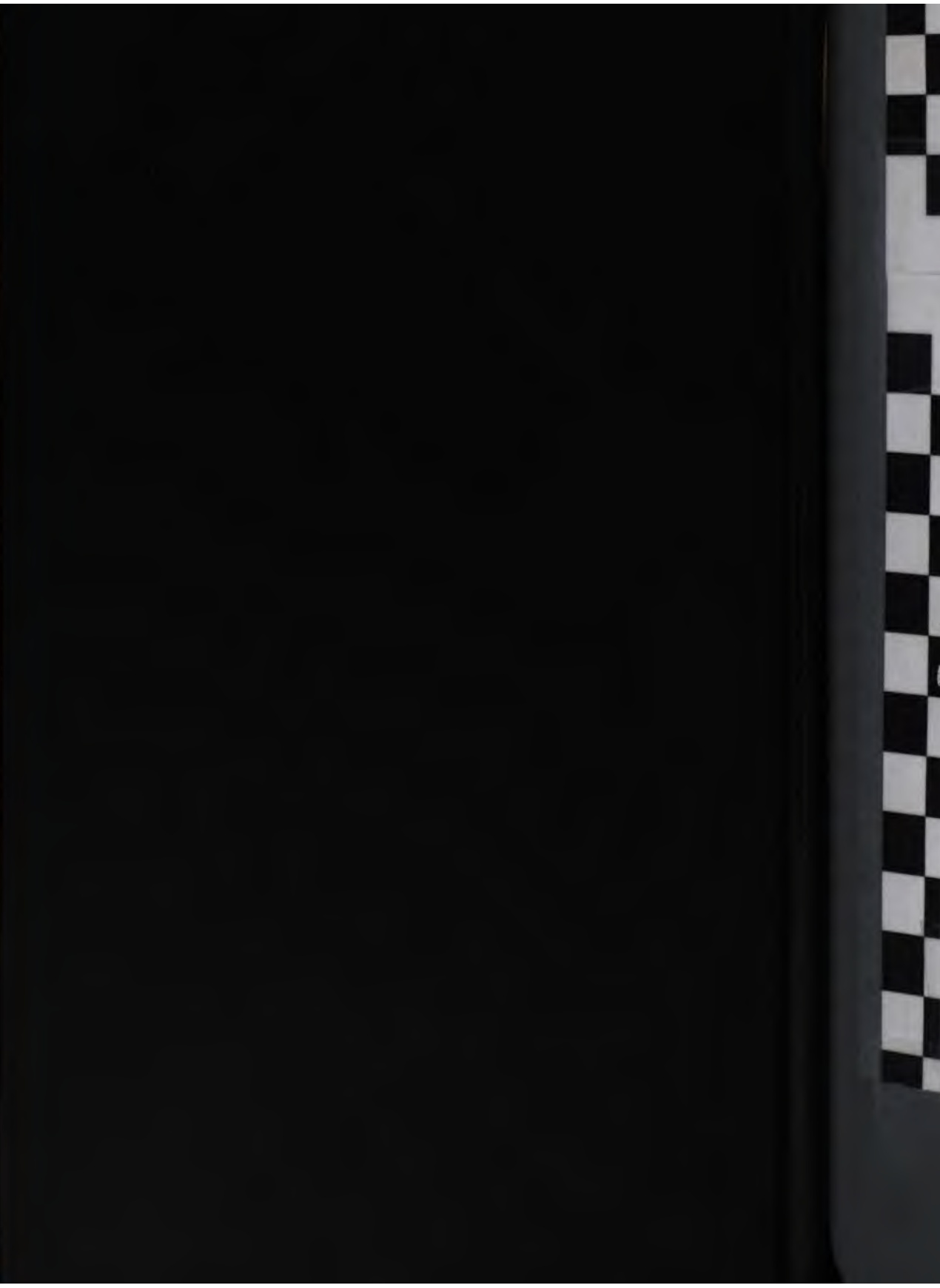
20 Hear ye also the word of Jehovah, the whole captivity, whom
21 I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon; thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah,

and concerning Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy to you in my name a lie,—
Behold, I will deliver them into the hand
Of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon,
And he shall kill them before your eyes:
22 And taken from them shall be a curse
By all the captivity of Judah in Babylon, saying,—
"Let Jehovah make thee like Zedekiah and Ahab,
Whom the king of Babylon burnt in the fire:"
23 Because they have done villany in Israel,
And prostituted the wives of their friends,
And spoke a word in my name falsely,
Which I had not commanded them;
But I know, and am witness, saith Jehovah.

24 And as to Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, thou shalt thus say,—
25 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying,—
Because thou hast sent in my name letters to the whole people, who are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah, the priest, and to all the priests, saying,—
26 Jehovah hath made thee a priest in the room of Jehoiada the priest, that ye might be the rulers of the house of Jehovah over every one that is insane and prophesies, that thou might-
27 est put him in prison and in manacles: and thou—wherefore hast thou not reproved Jeremiah, the Anathothite, who pro-
28 phesies to you? even because he hath sent to us in Babylon, saying,—"Long is *the time*, build ye houses and inhabit *them*;
29 plant gardens and eat the fruit of them." (Now Zephaniah had read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet:)

30 Therefore the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying,—
31 Send to the whole captivity, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah of Shemaiah the Nehelamite;
Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you,
When I had not sent him,
And has made you to trust in falsehood;
32 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,—
Lo, I will visit Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his seed;
There shall not be to him a man
To dwell in the midst of this people;
And he shall not see the good,
Which I shall do to my people, saith Jehovah;
Because he has spoken rebellion against Jehovah.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

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